■ PlayStation 3 ■ PlayStation Portable ■ PlayStation Network ■ PlayStation 2

PlayStation®

JULY 08

The Official Magazine

METAL GEAR SOLID® 4

GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

PlayStation - The Official Magazine Issue 8 (July 2008)

REVIEW

Never-before-revealed DETAILS

NEW LOCATIONS unveiled

The definitive word on the PS3's defining SYSTEM-SELLER

18 PREVIEWS
FALLOUT 3
LEGO BATMAN
AND MORE...

SILENT HILL HOMECOMING

THE MOST DISTURBING PREVIEW EVER!

PS3 SHOOTER SHOOTOUT

- SOCOM Confrontation
- Red Faction: Guerrilla
- Mercenaries 2
- Battlefield: Bad Company
- Aliens: Colonial Marines

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

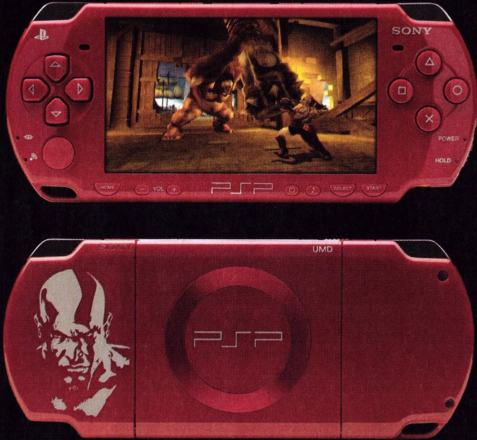
MATURE 17+

M

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Nudity
Sexual Content

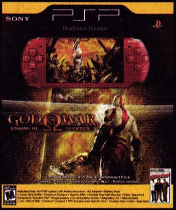
*Voucher Code good for download of Syphon Filter®: Combat Ops for the PSP® system on the PLAYSTATION® Network only via your PC or PS3™ system. Voucher Code expires 12/31/08. Voucher Code can only be redeemed through PLAYSTATION® Network ("PSN") Account Management. Requires PSN registration. Free voucher included. User responsible for all applicable Internet fees. ©2008 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. God of War is a registered trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Syphon Filter is a registered trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ©2007 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Superbad ©2007 Columbia Pictures Industries Inc. All rights reserved. Superbad ©2008 Layout and Design Sony Pictures Home Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. "PlayStation," "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.


SONY
POWER
HOLD
HOME
VOL
SELECT
START
PSP
UMD
PSP

FORGED IN THE DEPTHS OF HADES.
SO YES, IT'S A LIMITED EDITION.

**THE DEEP RED PSP® SYSTEM.
AVAILABLE ONLY IN THE
GOD OF WAR® ENTERTAINMENT PACK.**

Includes the exclusive deep red
PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system,
the God of War®: Chains of Olympus
game, Superbad UMD,™ and a
PLAYSTATION® Network voucher
for Syphon Filter®: Combat Ops.*


SONY
PSP
PlayStation Portable
GOD OF WAR
CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

PSP®
PlayStation Portable

GOD OF WAR
CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

Contents

July 2008

PlayStation The Official Magazine

PlayStation 3 · PlayStation Portable · PlayStation Network · PlayStation 2

Now, that's what I call a robot!

Update

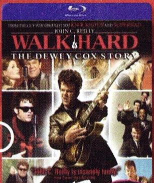
6 **THE NEXT LITTLEBIGTHING**

10 The PlayStation Interview: Haden Blackman

12 PlayStation Digest

14 Top 10 List

16 **BLU-RAY REVIEWS**


WALK HARD
THE DEWEY COX STORY
JOHN C. REILLY
"John C. Reilly is insanely funny"

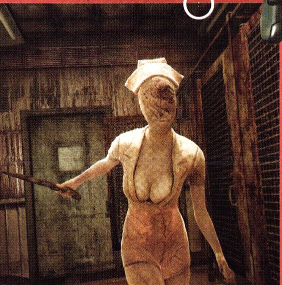
Features

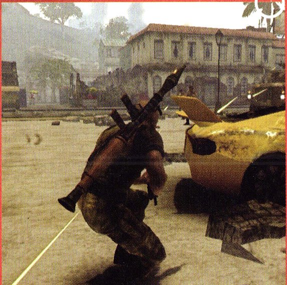
38 **METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS REVIEW**

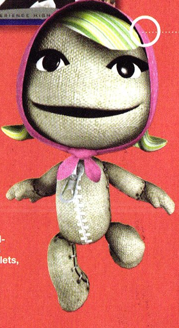
46 **SILENT HILL: HOMECOMING**

60 **TOP GUNS: SUPER SHOOTER ROUND-UP**

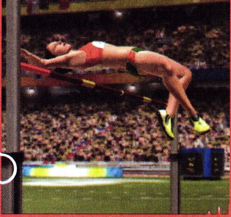
"Look, we were just teasing when we called you a 'butter face.' Now please put the knife down..."





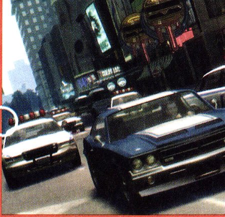


It's raining bullets, hallelujah! It's raining bullets, amen!



Can you guess her country from the colors on her bloomers? That's right—lean in real close.

"Very, funny, you jerks! This is *nothing* like riding a mechanical bull!"



Hands at 10 and 2, Niko. Didn't you learn anything in driver's ed?

Previews

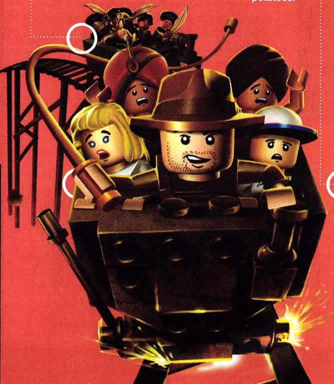
33 Afro Samurai
34 **BEIJING 2008**
35 Darksiders: Wrath of War
33 Destroy All Humans! Path of the Furon
20 **FALLOUT 3**
26 Ghostbusters: The Video Game
35 Legend of Spyro: Darkest Hour
28 LEGO Batman
25 Naruto Ultimage Ninja Heroes 2: The Phantom Fortress
25 Naruto Ultimate Ninja Storm
34 NASCAR 09

Just slop on a helping of barbeque sauce and those ribs will start looking mighty tasty.

Reviews

80 Condemned 2: Bloodshot
82 Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit
83 **HELLBOY: THE SCIENCE OF EVIL**
76 **LEGO INDIANA JONES**
81 Monster Madness: Grave Danger

"Hold onto your potatoes!"

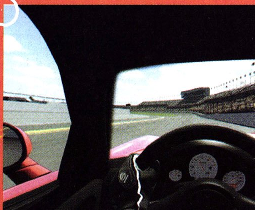


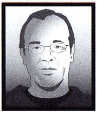
Network

84 GTA IV: Stand Out from The Crowds
86 **GT5 PROLOGUE: ONLINE SURVIVAL GUIDE**
88 How to survive the RPG Drought
90 Tactical Espionage: Metal Gear Trivia
92 PlayStation Network: Reviews, Downloads
94 Letters
96 PlayStation POV

Geometry Ball says: "Play *echochrome*." And we always listen to Geometry Ball.

If Niko read our *GT5 Prologue* tips, he wouldn't be in the jam he's in right now...





Editor's Note

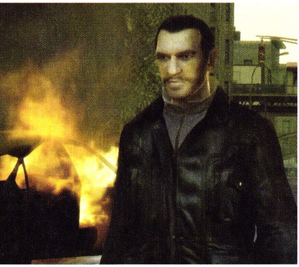
"You'll find a slight squeeze on the hooter an excellent safety precaution."

Welcome to the conclusion of PlayStation 3: Phase One. It's 18 months since launch and the early teething problems with brand-new technology are behind most developers. We've witnessed quality releases *(Uncharted, Assassin's Creed, Call of Duty 4* among them) and with *GTA IV* and now *Metal Gear Solid 4,* the maturing platform has a couple of no-brainer, must-buy games we'll all be talking about for a long time.

However, a quick squint at our reviews well this month (world exclusive on *MGS4* notwithstanding) illustrates the scorched earth of a summer dry spell. Triple A releases will be thin on the ground for a little while before we hit the holiday rush, at which point Phase Two will commence. Many of these games will have been cooking for nearly three years, or will be sequels, building on experience and knowledge earned from initial releases. Our expectations will start to rise with the anticipated tapping of the Cell processor power and data volume possible on Blu-ray. Phase Two, it seems, is when PlayStation 3 will really take off.

GTA IV was a fascinating study in the potential of PS3 as despite Rockstar's well-documented issues with the technology, the spectacular Liberty City does look that little sharper, its colors more rich, than on Xbox 360. When you then get to see *MGS4's* sparkling cinematic interludes, it's clear that the true potential is starting to be unleashed. What that means for the likes of Sucker Punch's *inFamous,* Insomniac's *Resistance 2,* and little known Quantic Dream title, *Heavy Rain* is mouthwatering. Or maybe eye watering would be more accurate.

> "When you then get to see *MGS4's* sparkling cinematic interludes, it's clear that the true potential is starting to be unleashed."



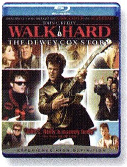
Until then the growing library of PlayStation Network games provides several impressive diversions (Teresa's fixated on *PixelJunk Monsters* and Gary, Roger, and Ken are getting their heads around *echochrome).* We should all be thankful that the reorganized PlayStation Store now lets you actually find content, and with the potential for movie downloads in the near future, along with music downloads into the forthcoming *SingStar,* it's all evidence of a maturing platform hitting its stride. And just imagine what Phase Three will bring.

For now, we're focusing on bringing you all the inside details on the games kicking off this second phase (such as *LittleBigPlanet,* page 6) and expect even more next month. As you'll hopefully notice, we're also shaping out more of our content so be sure to keep letting me know how we're doing.

Rob

"Quote" contest

Enter to win a Blu-ray movie! Unless you're a first time reader (in which case, welcome) you should know that the headline at the top of this column is a quote from a movie. Identify the movie, send your answer (along with your name and shipping address) to **PTOM_editor@futureus.com** with "Ed Note July" in the subject line. I'll pick one lucky winner at random to receive a Blu-ray movie. I'll be sending one out to Julio Rios of Mound House, NV who identified the quote last issue from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.*



PlayStation
The Official Magazine

EDITORIAL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF **Rob Smith**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Gary Steinman**
MANAGING EDITOR **Roger Burchill**
ASSISTANT EDITOR **Teresa Dun**
EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS **Scott Butterworth, David Craddock, Jason D'Aprile, Chris Hudak, Cameron Lewis, Tyler Nagata**
INTERN **Carlos Ruiz**

ART
ART DIRECTOR **Ken Bousquet**
DESIGN CONTRIBUTORS **Katrin Auch, Gary Liew, Eugene Wang**

BUSINESS
PUBLISHER **Daniel Morris**
dmorris@futureus.com
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR - GAMES GROUP **Nate Hunt**
562-983-8004, nhunt@futureus.com
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR (Bay Area) **Christina Grushkin**
650-238-2504, cgrushkin@futureus.com
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR (South West) **Isaac Ugay**
949-218-0981, Iugay@futureus.com
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE **Benjamin Alessio**
650-238-2324, balessio@futureus.com
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SALES & MARKETING **Jim Schiekofer**
646-723-5410, jschiekofer@futureus.com
CORP. SALES MIDWEST MANAGER **Jodi Sosna**
212-217-1358, jsosna@futureus.com
CORP. SALES WEST MANAGER **Nadine Weiss**
310-424-2254, nweiss@futureus.com
WEST COAST ACCOUNT MANAGER **Rachel Campos**
650-745-9207, rcampos@futureus.com
AD PROJECT MANAGER **Rhoda Ushijima**
650-238-2474, rushijima@futureus.com
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Arthur St. Germain**
650-238-2571, astgermaine@futureus.com
MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang**
arecio-ang@futureus.com
DIRECT MARKETING SPECIALIST **Alexandra Davydova**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Larry Briseno**

CIRCULATION
GROUP CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Kate Bailey**
NEWSSTAND COORDINATOR **Alex Guzman**
FULFILLMENT MANAGER **Angi Martinez**
GROUP BILLING & RENEWAL MANAGER **Mike Hill**
INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION MARKETING MANAGER **Betsy Wong**

MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT **Bill Kelchner**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus-inc.com

PRESIDENT **Jonathan Simpson-Bint**
VICE PRESIDENT/COO **Tom Valentino**
CFO **John Sutton**
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR/GAMES **Simon Whitcombe**
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR/BUS. DEV. **Dave Barrow**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR **Jon Phillips**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/MUSIC **Brad Tolinski**
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES **Nancy Durlester**
MARKETING DIRECTOR **Shawn Roberts**
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**

Future US, Inc. is part of Future plc.
Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines for people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy that passion by creating titles offering value for money, reliable information, smart buying advice and which are a pleasure to read. Today we publish more than 150 magazines in the US, UK, France and Italy. Over 100 international editions of our magazines are also published in 30 other countries across the world.

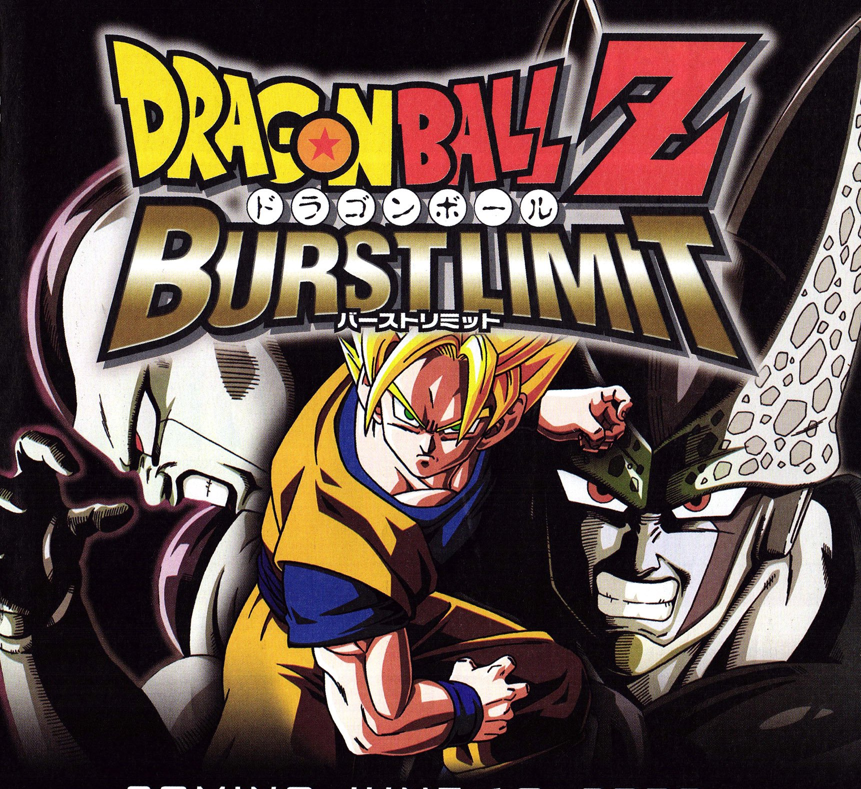
Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
Tel +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

PlayStation: The Official Magazine Customer Care
P.O. Box 5154
Harlan, Iowa 51593-0654
1-800-477-0484
For Subscription Problems Only!
playstationcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com
REPRINTS: Contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

ISSN: 1941-5303
PlayStation: The Official Magazine is published 13 times a year (monthly, except semi-monthly in July) by Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Ct, Ste 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080, USA. Periodicals postage paid in South San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. Ride-along enclosure in B-1. Newsstand distribution is handled by Time Warner Retail. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement #40043631. Returns: Bleuchip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Basic subscription rates: one year (13 issues) $20 U.S., Canada $34 U.S. (Canadian price includes GST (GST #128220688)), foreign $44 U.S. Prepaid in U.S. funds only. POSTMASTER send changes of address to PlayStation: The Official Magazine, P.O. Box 5154, Harlan, IA 51593-0654. Future US, Inc. also publishes *Maximum PC, Mac|Life, PC Gamer, Official Xbox Magazine, Nintendo Power, Guitar World, Revolver, Future Snowboarding, Snowboard Trade News,* and *Pregnancy.* Copyright 2008, Future US. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. CPC Int'l Pub Mail #1195484.



TEEN
T
Animated Blood
Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT

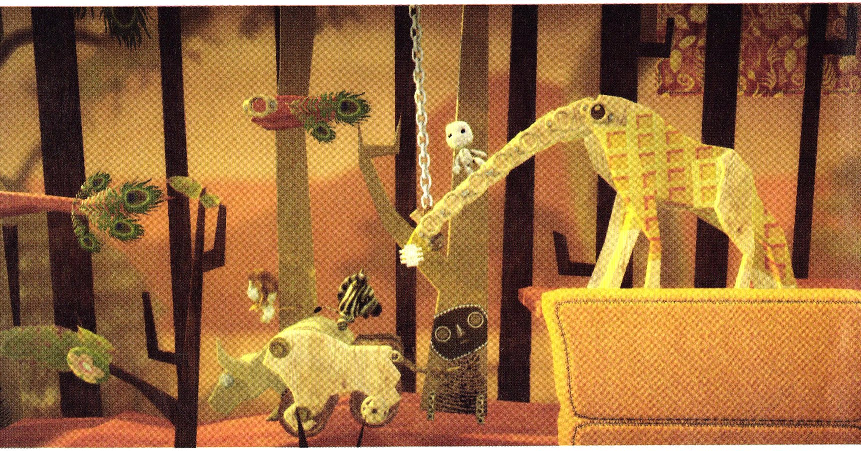
TOEI ANIMATION

XBOX 360 LIVE

PLAYSTATION 3

ATARI

Burst Limit © 2008 Dragon Ball Z® : Burst Limit © 2008 Atari, Inc. All rights reserved. © 2008 Bird Studio/SHUEISHA, TOEI Animation, Licensed by FUNimation Productions Ltd. All rights reserved. Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, Dragon Ball GT, and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of TOEI Animation. Developed by NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Game © 2008 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Marketed and distributed by Atari, Inc. New York, N.Y. Atari and the Atari logo are trademarks owned by Atari Interactive, Inc. The ESRB rating icons are registered trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Use of this product is subject to acceptance of a license agreement. The terms of this license agreement can be found in the product's manual. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online access requires broadband Internet service and a wireless access point or LAN. Certain limitations apply to Wi-Fi connectivity. User is responsible for Internet service fees. © 2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft.



Snap a pic of anything—your sofa, your thumbprint, the bottom of your shoe—and it can become a texture in *LittleBigPlanet*.

DEPT. OF HOT NEW STUFF

THE NEXT **LITTLEBIGTHING**

With a lineup of system-selling hotsclusives, PS3 is poised to rule holiday 2008

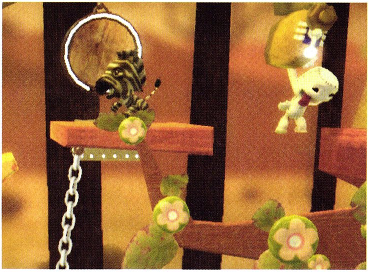
Summer is upon us, and the PS3 is heating up. By the time you read this, you might have already beaten *Grand Theft Auto IV* and you're close to tearing into *Metal Gear Solid 4*—arguably two of the biggest PlayStation 3 games yet. (Yes, we realize *GTA IV* isn't PS3-exclusive, but we also know that plenty of you were waiting for its release as just the excuse you needed to finally upgrade.) But what's around the corner that'll keep this momentum going? And, most important, does the PS3 have what it takes to own this holiday season?

We think so, but don't take our word for it. "It's already been a breakthrough year for PS3," proclaims Patrick Seybold, SCEA's director of social media. "As we head toward the holidays, the PS3 software lineup will offer depth and breadth that's simply not available on any other platform, making the console particularly competitive this season."

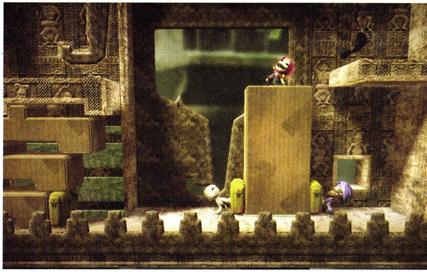
While it's not an outright declaration of victory, those bold words also have the benefit of being true. Looking ahead, it's easy to spot some boffo PS3 blockbusters in the pipeline, many of those available only for PS3 gamers. "Exclusive content is one of the hallmarks of the PlayStation brand and this will be even more evident as we head into the 2008 holiday season," Seybold declares. "We're really proud of the monster titles we have coming to PS3, including *LittleBigPlanet*, *SOCOM Confrontation*, *Resistance 2*, and *MotorStorm: Pacific Rift* to name a few."

Of course, we can't forget about the recent Blu-ray victory, another feather in the PS3's cap. For Wedbush Morgan analyst Michael Pachter, it might be the single biggest driver of sales this holiday season, trumping even the gargantuan games on the schedule. "Sony's biggest mover will be Blu-ray," Pachter predicts, "with a high attach rate expected at holiday for people buying HDTVs."

But for those of us already enjoying our PS3s, it's all about the games—including one of the quirkiest titles to come along in years. "We will kick off the holiday season in September with the launch of one of the most talked about titles this year, *LittleBigPlanet*," Seybold says. "This community-based game will pioneer a new genre of creative gaming, where gamers can craft and control experience based on their own creativity. *LittleBigPlanet* is also an example of how innovative PlayStation is embracing user-generated content. We expect this to be one of those industry-defining games—this holiday and beyond." He's not kidding.



Levels aren't just horizontal in nature; you can also climb as high as you'd like. The game isn't vertically challenged, so let your creativity reach for the skies.



It's more than just a game: In *LittleBigPlanet* you can design a level that's actually an interactive comic strip or mini-film. Or...demented opera?

Six reasons why *LittleBigPlanet* will help the PS3 rule the world

① **PLAY** The first part of the game's three-stage tagline (Play. Create. Share) is of course the most important. Since it was first shown, more "game" has been added to the single-player and co-operative experience. Gone is the "sponge" that you collected, replaced by a more generic collectible that adds a competitive element to the co-operatively spirited experience. Racing through levels with friends is fun, but the addition of competing for points pitched with danger in the form of pits and traps (if you die you'll respawn a few seconds later at a set point) is helping kick up the core play experience.

② **CREATE** Everything you see in the levels shipping with the game has been built using the tools you'll have at your disposal. Navigating the menus will take a little practice, as will understanding the physical relationship between all the moving parts. (In our recent playtest we created a vehicle, complete with wheels, to move through the level, placed it, and off it rolled while we were busy on the next part of our design. It was a few minutes later when we wanted to test the design that we realized it had skidaddled way off into the distance!) Each of your creations is stored on your LittleBig-Moon, which orbits the planet, and you can view it from your customizable pod. Think of the pod as your mothership; you can design it how you choose, and from there zoom down to the main planet for the provided game experience, or head off to the moon and shape your own levels.

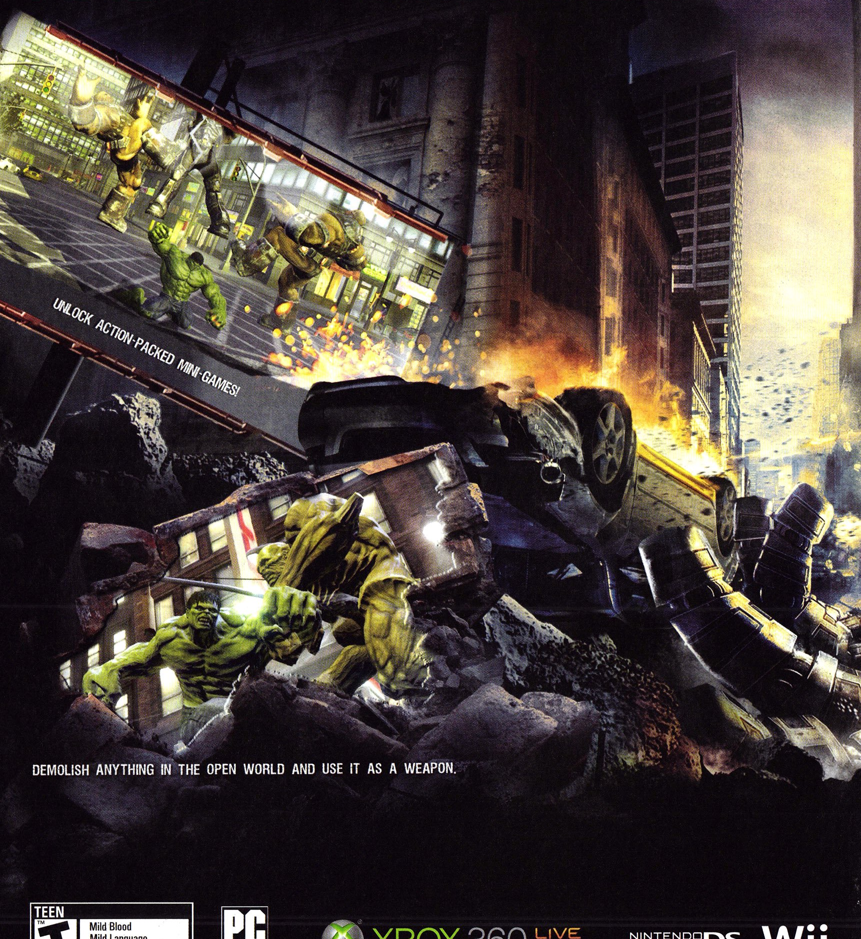
③ **SHARE** The best levels and overall *LBP* experiences will be voted on by the public. That means you have to make them available for others to play. You can lock your designs so that other players don't just take your hard work for themselves, but you can also send your levels to friends for beta testing, for example. Expect collaborative efforts from players around the globe. The more complex the design, the more it will require input from multiple helpers. Much like the PC game mod community burgeoned over the Internet, you might find someone who has perfected a particular device you want to use. With shared collaboration, the fan community will have an opportunity to get as creative as the developers.

④ **CAPTURE** Support for the PlayStation Eye opens up quite an extraordinary range of options for budding designers. Oh, sure, the potential for dodgy shots is readily apparent, and will be policed by the community—images dubbed unsuitable will be squashed by SCEA moderators. But for the vast majority, aside from letting you put your face in the game, the PS Eye will also allow you to get creative with textures. Let's say you want a blue jean texture: Just shoot a pic of your pant leg and apply it to an in-game "sticker," essentially adding that new texture to your options.

⑤ **IMAGINE** What you may have seen of the game so far could fairly be described as a platformer. Cute, fun, cooperative—yet still a platformer. But each level creation doesn't have to be like that. With all these tools at your disposal you could, for example, tell a joke through devices, moving parts, and character interactions within your "level." You could tell a story, with the ability to place musical cues at any point in the level allowing you to develop tension or drama in certain moments as you move through the world. Also remember that though you've seen levels that are primarily horizontal, this blank canvas also has a vast vertical ceiling. Pachinko machine? No problem. The key in every level design idea is not being constrained by what you might have seen, but imaging what you can do once you get familiar with the tools at your disposal.

⑥ **ENJOY!** Sure, watching someone play *LittleBigPlanet* can be fun. Seeing them create and place objects in a level, then seamlessly switch into the game mode to test out their creation, can be a handy tutorial. But the experience changes exponentially when you actually get your hands on the controller, sit down in front of the TV, and get to work playing and creating. You could spend hours in the character creation menu alone. Once you're alongside your buddies, it won't take long before you discover how to do the slap move and send them flying across the map. Or, just grab on to them and don't let go. The simple gameplay means that it's instantly accessible: You run left and right, you jump, you grab on to stuff. Sure, you can smile, frown, and indulge in the aforementioned slapping, but getting feedback through the controller, where the intuitive control makes each action easy to master, illustrates how getting hands-on with the experience is going to be vital. We expect to see a public beta in the next few months, and that will be the opportunity for everyone to get a grasp of what this *LittleBigPlanet* craziness is all about. We're betting you'll fall under its charming spell in the process.

FIND YOUR INNER HERO AND


UNLOCK ACTION-PACKED MINI-GAMES!
DEMOLISH ANYTHING IN THE OPEN WORLD AND USE IT AS A WEAPON.

TEEN

T

Mild Blood
Mild Language
Violence

ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

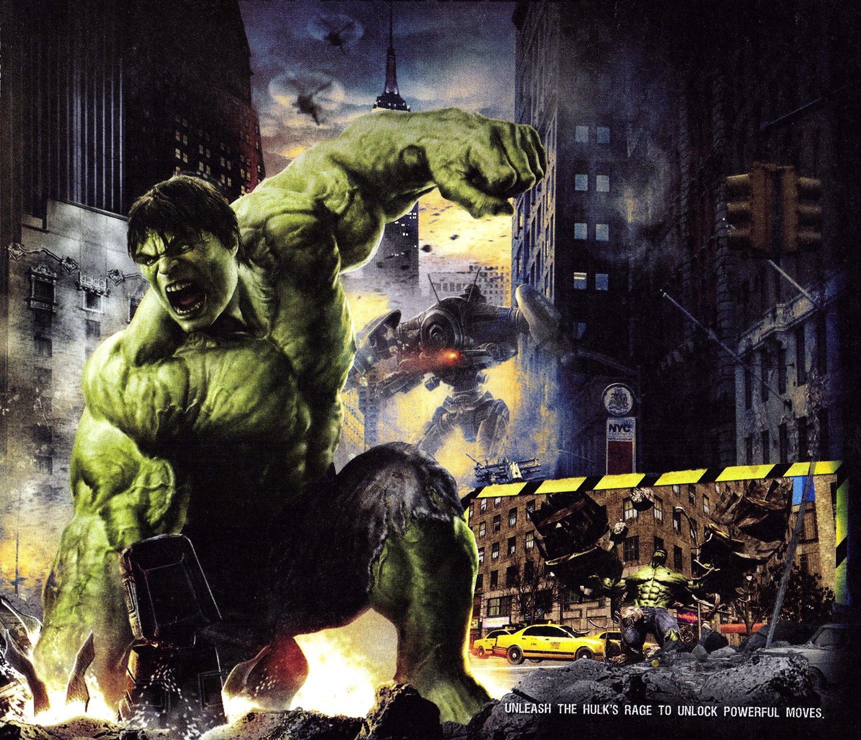
PC
DVD-ROM
SOFTWARE

XBOX 360. LIVE

NINTENDO DS. Wii

© SEGA. All rights reserved. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. The Incredible Hulk, the Movie © 2008 MVL Film Finance LLC. Marvel, The Incredible Hulk, all character names and their distinctive likenesses: TM & © 2008 Marvel Entertainment, Inc. and its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are under license from Microsoft. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

UNLEASH INCREDIBLE FURY.



UNLEASH THE HULK'S RAGE TO UNLOCK POWERFUL MOVES.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK™

WWW.INCREDIBLEHULKTHEGAME.COM

JUNE 2008

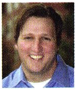
AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION®3
AND PLAYSTATION®2 COMPUTER
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS.

AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT EDGE OF REALITY MARVEL SEGA®

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION INTERVIEW

HADEN BLACKMAN

Directing the interactive future of the *Star Wars* universe is a daunting task. We talk to the man responsible...



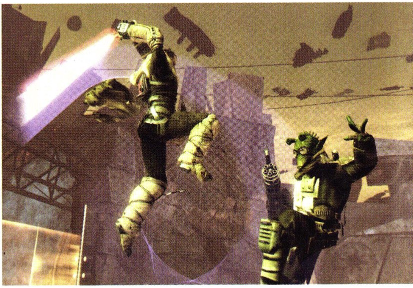
With no new movies to bounce off, imagine the pressure of helming the next great *Star Wars* installment. Such is the task facing LucasArts Project Lead Haden Blackman, creator and writer of the plotline around Darth Vader's Secret Apprentice in *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed.*

PTOM: *The Force Unleashed* hits all three PlayStation platforms, with unique content in each version. Did they each require separate development or is it possible to share resources between the three platforms?

HB: We built each version of the game from the ground up to take advantage of each platform's strengths. We shared the story, concept art, and characters across all platforms, and the PS2 and PSP also share some assets. There is unique content on both the PS2 and PSP—a chance for the player to go to the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, for example—and the PSP has a unique "historical mode" that allows players to relive classic *Star Wars* battles (such as the duel between Vader and Luke on Cloud City), but with unleashed powers and interactive environments.

PTOM: A lot of time went into developing and integrating new technology for PS3. Can you tell us a bit about that process, and what we can expect from the final showcase of this new engine?

HB: It was really, really hard. We essentially integrated three separate physics systems. Havok provides the base physics layer and interactions; Digital Molecular Matter simulates the physical properties of a wide variety of materials in our world to allow the player to interact in authentic ways with everything from shattering glass to bending metal; and euphoria simulates a central nervous system for many of our characters, allowing them to react to every Force Push or throw differently and authentically. It was quite a challenge to get all three of these technologies talking to one another reliably, and we wouldn't have been able to do it without the processing power of the new platforms. We also built an entirely new renderer to take advantage of the next-gen systems. This renderer has allowed us to create environments that feel true to the films.



"We wanted everything in the game to feel familiar but new."

PTOM: Unleashing the Force in this spectacular fashion—where did that idea come from, and did you expect George Lucas to approve it, or were you nervous it would be vetoed?

HB: We brainstormed a number of ideas when we first kicked off "the next *Star Wars* Game" internally. One of these was a concept set in the far-future of the *Star Wars* universe, in which the Jedi and Sith have learned to use their powers in brand new and devastating ways. Ultimately, we shelved this concept because of the time frame—we really wanted to bridge the gap between the two trilogies—but we always liked the idea of "over the top" Force powers. We were really nervous that George Lucas wouldn't approve our "re-imagining" of the Force, though. In order to convey it to him, we put together a short "pre-vis" video that basically showcased a character wielding these awesome, unleashed powers—a supercharged Force push, a Repulse, a Grip that he uses to throw a Stormtrooper into an oncoming TIE fighter. After watching the pre-vis, he told us that the type of action portrayed would "make a great game…" We were quite relieved.

PTOM: Was there extra pressure on getting the right game design given that there aren't any more movies to base new games on? Was it liberating?

HB: It was a little of both. We're all huge *Star Wars* fans, so we want to make sure that we meet expectations and deliver something that is truly a new chapter in the *Star Wars* saga. Crafting a story that could bridge the gap between the two trilogies took quite a bit of work, especially since we had to find creative ways to tie into both the prequels and the classic films. At the same time, it was a bit easier from a logistics standpoint because we weren't beholden to a pre-existing storyline or something that was in active development. We could create a story that worked for the game, and make changes along the way as necessary to take advantage of the gameplay, technology, and art we could deliver. And we didn't have any dependencies beyond the team.

PTOM: Was there a particular inspiration for the character of Vader's Secret Apprentice?

HB: One of our mantras was that we wanted everything in the game to feel familiar but new. All of the characters had to fit this rule. We looked to existing *Star Wars* archetypes with all of our characters to make them feel familiar, so we knew from the outset that we wanted the main character to be fairly young, conflicted, and destined for something "great." At the same time, we wanted him to feel new, and we felt that starting on the Dark side was something we hadn't done in a game before (and the idea of hunting down Jedi on behalf of Darth Vader really resonated with consumers and fans during focus testing). We hit on the idea of "Vader's Secret Apprentice" relatively early, and the story possibilities unfolded from there. For the look, we wrestled with this for a long time. Eventually, we found inspiration in thinking about the character as defined by his relationship with Vader. We reasoned that Darth Vader would be a very tough task master and horrible father figure. He doesn't care if the Apprentice gets hurt on missions. He doesn't make sure he has a fancy outfit. He keeps him isolated and beaten down. From that, we ended up with the Apprentice's starting appearance.

PTOM: The phrase "comic sidekicks" causes many *Star Wars* fans to shudder with memories of—dare we even speak its name—Jar Jar. Is that a factor in how you work the dialogue and actions of a character like PROXY?

HB: During our early meetings with George Lucas, he stressed that we needed to create new characters based on familiar archetypes. A love interest, Jedi mentor, and comic sidekick were all part of this direction. Again, we wanted to do something familiar but new with our comic sidekick. We decided that the sidekick should be someone that the Apprentice has known for years, and Vader would only allow a droid to know of the Apprentice's existence. But, Vader doesn't allow the Apprentice to "keep" PROXY as a friend—the droid has functions and abilities that Vader values. He is an advanced hologram droid that can be used for both long-range communication and training. Because he's a droid, it was easy to fall into a trap of making him too much like C-3PO or even HK-47 (the sinister droid from *Knights of the Old Republic*). We decided early on that he'd be rather inno-cent and naïve in some ways, while still having an edge to him. Ultimately, he's become one of my favorite new characters.

PTOM: Though the game started development before DualShock 3 was announced, will there be rumble effects?

HB: Yes. We planned this for other platforms, so it was relatively easy to get it up and working on the PS3.

PTOM: Do you see *TFU* as a launch pad for other games following this plot arc, or will future *Star Wars* games jump to different historical periods?

HB: I think that both are possibilities. The core concept of *The Force Unleashed* could easily be applied to different time periods—there's no reason why we couldn't set a *Force Unleashed* game in the far future or distant past of the *Star Wars* universe. At the same time, while we're telling what we feel to be an epic story, the time period between the two trilogies remains extremely fertile ground for other stories. The characters we've created could live on in other stories and games.

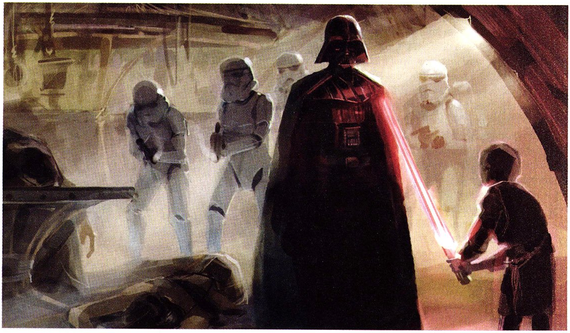
PTOM: You've got LEGO ships, a comic book, making-of art book, miniatures—any offshoot cross-licensing opportunity you particularly wanted for *TFU*?

HB: I think the licensing program is amazing. It includes pretty much everything you'd expect from a film, including the action figures, a *Force Unleashed* lightsaber, and the comic book adaptation. I'd love to see some *TFU*-based Halloween costumes, though.

Haden Blackman 411

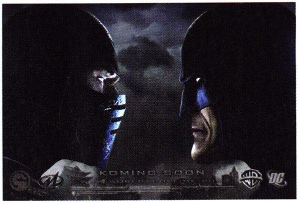
TITLE: Project Lead
EDUCATION: Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing, University of California, Santa Cruz
CREDENTIALS: Joined LucasArts in 1997 as writer/researcher on *Star Wars* reference utility, *Star Wars: Behind the Magic* and *Star Wars Episode I: Insider's Guide*. Later, was the Producer of MMO *Star Wars Galaxies*. Now is behind and responsible for all LucasArts' *Star Wars* games.
DID YOU KNOW: Blackman's other writing credits include *The Field Guide to North American Monsters* and *The Field Guide to North America Hauntings* (Random House). That's in addition to his *Making Of Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* and *Star War: The Essential Guide to Weapons and Technology*, and others.
GETTING STARTED: Blackman's inspiration to write came on a fateful meeting with legendary sci-fi author Ray Bradbury who advised the aspiring author to write every day and read as much as possible. Good advice.

> "We reasoned that Darth Vader would be a very tough task master and horrible father figure."



PlayStation Digest

Top Stories, Industry Bits, and Oddities



Batman, you have been chosen to defend the realm of Earth

When it comes to comics and fighting games, team-ups are no rarity—but word of *Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe* threw us for a loop. On one hand, you have classic characters like Batman and Superman; on the other, you have brutal, bloody brawlers like Scorpion and Sub-Zero. Our first question was: Why? Our next question: Why not?!

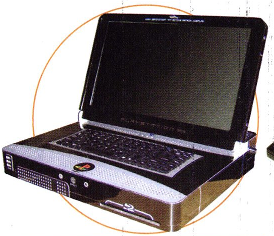
Typical to any crossover, the story here involves one of those gosh-darn cataclysmic events that leads to the merger of the two worlds, with the fate of the universe hinging on the outcome of some furious fisticuffs between the denizens of Outworld and the heroes of DC's universe. Squaring off against classic *Mortal Kombat* characters will be a roster of capes who'll be chosen based on a few key criteria. Foremost is popularity; you can't have a DC game without Supes and Bats, after all. Next, the developers focused on how well a character's fighting style might fit within the game, and also how well a DC character might match up against a specific *MK* foe. Battles will take place in destructible 3D environs, in which you can punch through a wall then fall to the level below, fighting all the while. Also cool: The combat mechanics will change depending on where you might be—and that includes a different style for when you're plummeting downward.

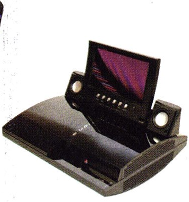
And for those of you wondering how any fight with Superman can possibly be a fair one, remember that Big Blue is vulnerable to magic, so a punch from a mystical ninja is bound to inflict *some* damage. We also hear that the more-human characters like Batman will have some of their abilities elevated by the supernatural hoodoo that seems to surround the *Mortal Kombat* universe.

Due out this fall, *MK vs. DC* might be just the refresh this franchise needs. Stay tuned to PTOM for a big update next month!

A Tale of Two Portables

The PS3 is like the linebacker of today's consoles—it's big, powerful, and *heavy*. Heavy enough to make you want to set it up in your home-theater system...and pray you never decide to remodel your den. Okay, that's an exaggeration. (Or we just have weak arms from lack of exercise.) But the PS3's heftiness doesn't exactly lend itself to mobility. So when we discovered not one but two attempts at making the PS3 more portable, we lifted our eyebrows. Was there a need for a portable PS3? Isn't that what the PSP is for? Upon further examination, we found that one of the attempts was *much* more useful than the other.





The Winner

Now this modded PS3 is a work of beauty. Benjamin Heckendorn disassembled a 60 GB PS3, identified the parts, and then blueprinted a way for them to fit into a laptop-style case. Next, he designed a case, routed it, and reassembled the PS3's parts into it (along with a 17" HDTV 720p screen with HDMI connection, a stereo audio amplifier, and a USB keyboard). The end result? A 17" x 13.75" x 3" machine that weighs 16 pounds and is actually thinner than the original PS3. Ben's PlayStation 3 Portable does everything a regular PS3 can do. (It doesn't have full PC functionality, though—at heart, it's still a PS3.)

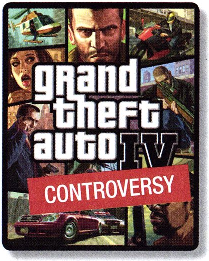
For the past eight years, Ben has built laptops out of other machines, too. What does he have to say about the hardware of the PS3? "I do think it's the best built of all the new consoles, with a great cooling system and a very open system, allowing all types of media to be played and peripherals to be used. It was very similar to many of my other projects. However, with this one I didn't alter the original cooling system as drastically as with the 360."

Even better, Ben built this machine to be auctioned off to charity. To find out more info, check out his site at www.benheck.com.

The Loser

Madcow's PS3 Clearvision 7" LCD Screen only supports up to 190x234 resolution—not exactly ideal for the PS3's high-def capabilities but at least it's widescreen. It comes with two speakers, accepts both NTSC and PAL signals, and is available on the Madcow website for an undisclosed price.

Useful? Perhaps...if you like to lug around a PS3, the screen, and the speakers when you go on road trips. On second thought, can't you just plug your PS3 into the hotel's TV? The only conceivable use we can think of for the Clearvision LCD is for people who own PS3s but don't own televisions, which makes up a well-rounded zero-percent of the world. Probably.



Grand Theft Punditry

On April 29, gamers called in sick across the country so they could indulge in *Grand Theft Auto IV.* While fans were whizzing through Liberty City (or dreaming about whizzing through Liberty City as they zombie-walked their offices in a *GTA IV*-induced haze), news centers around the globe were doing their own Rockstar-related scrambling. News stories cashing in on *GTA IV's* hype slammed the wires. Some were biased, some thoughtful, some outrageous, and some ironic. Here are some of our favorite *GTA IV* launch day headlines:

"Tough guy wannabes snap up *Grand Theft Auto IV"* —Steve Rubenstein, SFGate

"Grand Theft Auto IV: Art for alpha males…The year's biggest computer game is art online in the sense that the first cave paintings were—crude, unmediated and violent" —Peter Lyle, Art and Architecture blog, The Guardian

"Jack Thompson Compares *GTA IV* to Polio" —Avinash Ball, Tech2.com

"Jack Thompson Claims *GTA IV* is Porn and Everyone Should be Indicted" —GamePolitics.com

"Violence in *GTA IV* Troubles Some" —NBC10.com

"NYC Pols, Officials Outraged With Violent *GTA IV:* Claim game falsely portrays 'Safest City in America'" —Magee Hickey, CBS New York

"Gamers Stack Lines at Midnight to Steal, Kill and Commit *Grand Theft Auto"* —Stan Morris, KAIT, Arkansas

"UPS Employees Axed over *GTA IV* Thefts" —Chris Kohler, Wired.com

"Man stabbed while waiting to buy *Grand Theft Auto IV"* —Holden Frith, Times Online

"It's Not Just About Killing Hookers Anymore: The surprising narrative richness of *Grand Theft Auto IV"* —Chris Baker, Slate.com

FF Minis

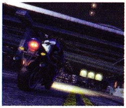
A chibi Squall and a 2.2-inch Tifa you can cup in your hand? Let the fanfics (and scary fanboy fantasies) begin! *Final Fantasy* devotees will find these sweet, doe-eyed miniatures available exclusively on Square Enix's online store at www.square-enix-shop.com. This set of four goes for $16.99. Not exactly cheap, but we know some people will go to great lengths to have Ashe gazing down at them from their shelves.

Living in Paradise for a Year

On the Chinese Zodiac calendar, it's the Year of the Rat. But for the folks at Criterion Games, it's "The Year of Paradise"—and by "Paradise," they mean *Burnout Paradise*, of course. Their plan is to release *Burnout Paradise* add-ons for the next 12 months, starting with these three slated for summer and fall.

Name: CAGNEY
Release: END OF JUNE

- New cars, including the Hunter Citizen Cop Car, the Krieger PCPD Special, and the Hunter Olympus.
- Improved vehicle sound effects, including a "whining transmission" for the Krieger 616 Sport and a "fizzing, airy induction system" for the Jansen P12.
- 70 new Freeburn Challenges, including multi-part challenges, timed challenges, and co-op leaderboards.



Name: DAVIS
Release: AUGUST

- Motorbikes! This includes unique game modes, challenges, and locations created especially for motorbikes.
- Nighttime. For the first time, see Paradise City at night.

Name: EASTWOOD
Release: FALL

- New locations, including a waterside cityscape that'll introduce new gameplay features.

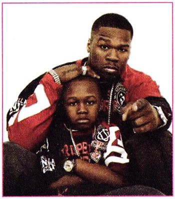
gamesradar. & playSwitch.com

THE WIN ANY 5 GAMES CONTEST

You Choose the Systems & Games

Many chances to win!
Visit playSwitch.com for details

www.playSwitch.com
"Trade Smart. Play Often."



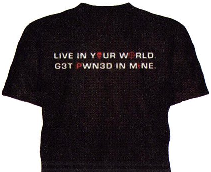
The World's Youngest Videogame Developer?

Who are 50 Cent's biggest inspirations when it comes to his career as a videogame creator? One is his nine-year-old son. In an interview with MTV News regarding his new game *50 Cent: Blood on the Sand*, "Fiddy" said about his son: "His judgment sets a strong impression on me. It almost simplifies things. A lot of the stuff that might come into play when I'm choosing what I would actually do doesn't matter to him. He just wants to have fun." His son is one of the reasons 50 is focusing on creating "as much exclusive music as possible" for the game. He doesn't want players to turn down the sound in his videogame, as his son commonly does for the ones they play together. "When you put good quality material into the game, I think you can tolerate the game longer."

SOUL CALIBUR IV
PREMIUM EDITION
RP

THE SOUL STILL BURNS...YOUR WALLET!

No surprise here: *Soulcalibur IV* will launch with a Premium Edition. The $79.99 package will include a metal case, a comic/art book that serves as a prequel to the game, a "tournament kit" (which is actually a bracket card), redemption cards that unlock exclusive customization content, a copy of *Soulcalibur IV* (of course), and presumably, a T-shirt. Some of the more passionate fans may be interested in the special edition, but others can pick up a lone copy of the game for the regular $59.99.



T-SHIRT OF THE MONTH

Remember those old "live in your world, play in ours" Sony ads from earlier in the decade? We do. So does J!NX. The company plays on Sony's slogan with its "live in your world, get pwned in mine" T-shirts. It's our pick of the month because of its subtle PlayStation reference and its badass-in-a-totally-dorky-way attitude.

TOP10LIST

What we're playing, watching, reading, and absorbing in the world of entertainment this month...or eating.

Mary McDonnell | Human (or Cylon?) | You ain't got the cubits

One morning, after marathoning through the first three seasons of *Battlestar Galactica* on DVD, Gary stumbled into the office with a troubled look on his face. "Is Mary McDonnell...hot?" he asked. "Yes," Rob affirmed. "Yes, she is."

WALKERS
SALT & VINEGAR

Walkers Salt & Vinegar Crisps | Snack | 50 pence

We don't really know what a pence is worth, but we figure it's about tree-fiddy, U.S. Regardless, this is the only foodstuff Rob requires. He could live on this format of the potato chip that he insists on calling "crisps" and claims are the greatest tasting chips of all time. We would like to confirm this, but the fat git ate all the ones he brought back from his recent jaunt to England.

York
PEPPERMINT PATTIE

York Peppermint Patties | Snack | $1.00

Something called the Flake bar did manage to survive the transatlantic journey in Rob's goody bag. Meh, they're okay (if you like stale milk chocolate)—but nothing beats the refreshing sensation of cool, creamy mint covered by dark, delicious chocolate. Yum! Score one for 'merican candies!

Scrapbook Paper | Crafts | Varies

You can line your bookshelves with scrapbook paper (a project Teresa undertook one weekend), frame it to use as décor for your walls (a project Teresa will undertake in a coming weekend), use it as backing to pretty up a memo board, and create borders for photographs. Yes, Teresa plays with fancy paper when she isn't playing games...and dreams about her next editorial gig with *Martha Stewart Living.*

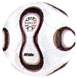
La Taqueria

La Taqueria Cheese Quesadilla | Food | $2.25

Every town in America probably has a Mexican eatery called *La Taqueria,* but Teresa's favorite is in the Mission district in San Francisco. If you think a cheese quesadilla doesn't deserve to be on this list, you have no idea what you're missing. Imagine a crispy, greasy, cheesy, crunchy, oily quesadilla that's so good you know it had to have been fried in lard (not butter).

Ceramic White PSP Slim Case | Accessory | $9.99 and up

Hard case or soft? First-party or third? Local Japanese import store or eBay? When it comes to choosing a case for her dainty white PSP-2000, Teresa has to make a lot of decisions. Should it be light and fit in her purse or roomy enough to fit UMDs and memory cards? All white or white with black trimming? Too many decisions!



Peligro | Sport | Pain

In a highly uncharacteristic move for gamers, Rob and Ken have signed on to play for a co-ed indoor soccer team. Yes, real soccer, not the kind we play on the PlayStation. Weird, huh? The team's name is *Peligro,* which is Spanish for "danger," but considering that Rob's given up 33 goals in three games; the only danger here is of ever winning a game.

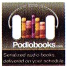
STEAM CUISINE

Taylor Fresh Steam Cuisine | Food | ~$5.00

Judging by this month's Top 10, the only thing we do around here besides play games is eat. But food would weigh heavily on your mind if your office was located in the Sahara desert of restaurants like ours is. At least Roger's new lunch alternative, Steam Cuisine, is inexpensive, convenient, tasty, and healthy...which is a good excuse for him to hit the vending machine later for a chocolate bar.

Fast | Tchotchke | Gift with purchase of VW GTI

Considering all the tchotchkes that come through our offices from game company promotions, we're pretty immune to marketing fluff. But Roger was genuinely excited to receive his Fast in the mail. In fact, it's whispering to him right now...telling him to only buy VWs in *GT5 Prologue.*



Podiobooks | Media | Free

What do you get when you cross audiobooks and podcasts? Only Teresa knows for sure, but whatever you get, you can get it for free at www.podiobooks.com. Teresa just finished a podiobook called *How to Succeed in Evil.* Should we be concerned?

N4G

news for gamers

1040°
Far Cry 2 Devs 'Worried' by PS3...
1200°
...ayStation bounces ...ecret game
(205)
780°
Rumour: PS4 to ... ward...

PS3 News and Rumors

New Playstation 3 Autumn?
(23)
660°
The Technology of Final Fantasy XIII
(51)

HOTTEST **PS3 News**

HOTTEST **PS3 Rumors**

HOTTEST **PS3 Videos**

Visit **N4G.com**, the hottest social gaming news and information site.

- Get the latest gaming news and information as it breaks.
- Join the community. Submit your own stories, tips, reviews and more.
- Your opinion matters. Debate and discuss the latest gaming trends.
- Get paid up to $500 per month for submitting game news

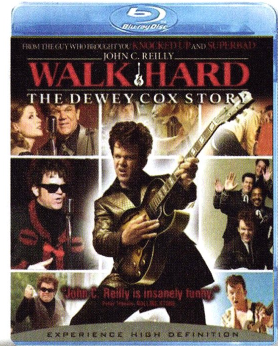
Try it now! Get your up-to-the-minute PS3 news at: www.N4G.com/ps3

Faster access to breaking PS3 News and Information that matters to you.

www.N4G.com

Blu-ray Central

Classics. Soon-to-be and not-so-much.


Blu-ray Disc
FROM THE GUY WHO BROUGHT YOU KNOCKED UP AND SUPERBAD
JOHN C. REILLY
WALK HARD
THE DEWEY COX STORY
"John C. Reilly is insanely funny."
Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION

PlayStation: The Official Magazine
PICK OF THE MONTH

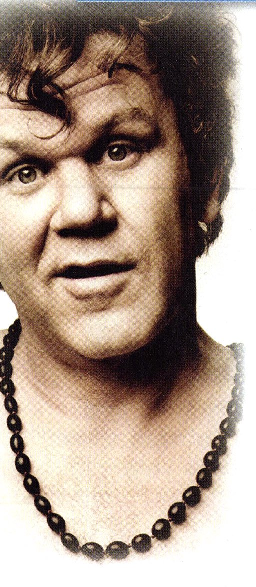
Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story

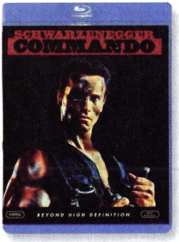
PRICE: $39.95 **RATED:** PG

Walk Hard is Sony's big debut of its BD-Live features, allowing you to download entire musical numbers supported by funny Coxologist commentary before them. You can also download movie previews, but be warned that the speed we encountered was painfully slow. The disc itself still manages to cram in some entertaining additions.

Aside from being a hilarious, often insanely over-the-top satire that deserves a place beside *This is Spinal Tap,* the picture quality shines and the great soundtrack is pristine on Blu-ray. The hefty amount of extras are actually worth the trip as well, from the usual array of deleted and extended scenes, to all the musical numbers, commentary, the fantastic Cox sausage commercials, and much more.

MOVIES ★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★



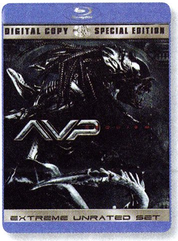

SCHWARZENEGGER
COMMANDO
BEYOND HIGH DEFINITION

Commando

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** R

It's hard to say if anyone who didn't grow up in the '80s will appreciate *Commando.* It's a perfect marker for its time—full of fake emotions, clichés, and one-liners celebrating gratuitous acts of violence. Watching *Commando* now is an unabashed guilty pleasure. Ah-nuld engaging in saccharine displays of affection with the then young and innocent Alyssa Milano...kissing a deer; bopping each other with ice cream. It all seems surreal today, and the absurdly cartoonish action likely fueled every shooting game we've seen since the movie's release.

MOVIES ★★★
EXTRAS ★

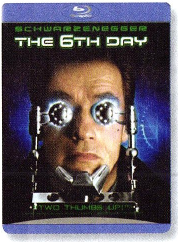

DIGITAL COPY
SPECIAL EDITION
AVP
EXTREME UNRATED SET

AVP Requiem

PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** UNRATED

Why is it so hard to make a movie combining two of the greatest sci-fi monsters in cinematic history? The original *AVP* was an abysmally trite and banal piece of garbage—so bad that you'd think that it couldn't get worse. You'd be wrong. *AVP Requiem* is mean-spirited, inane, and displays direction which had us scouring the credits for Uwe Boll's name. Given how bad the scenes you can actually see are, it's almost a blessing that some of the action scenes are incomprehensibly dark. However, the presentation is, not surprisingly, excellent, and the extras are plentiful and even interesting.

MOVIES ★
EXTRAS ★★★★


SCHWARZENEGGER
THE 6TH DAY
TWO THUMBS UP!

The 6th Day

PRICE: $28.95 **RATED:** PG-13

Where *Commando* reveled in the kill-everyone mentality of the '80s, *The 6th Day* is, somewhat ironically, Arnold's attempt to make a socially conscious action flick. Sony's second BD-Live offering this month might offer pretty lame online features (just movie previews available to download), but the rest of the extras are solid. The movie itself is engaging, if at times laughable, and looks and sounds fantastic in hi-def.

MOVIES ★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★

Universal Finally Comes Around

The hits on Blu-ray just keep on coming now that the HD format war is over. Earlier this year, Universal finally announced its initial round of Blu-ray offerings. The first round starts July 22nd, with the release of the *Mummy* series (including the *Scorpion King)*, followed by titles people might actually want to watch like *Doomsday, American Gangster, Knocked Up, The 40-Year-Old Virgin, Miami Vice, End of Days, U-571, Land of the Dead,* and others from the back catalog.

More exciting is the release of both seasons one and two of *Heroes* on August 26th. Beyond that, Universal's big screen titles will be released the same time as the DVD version, so movie lovers can expect all this summer's blockbusters like *Wanted, The Incredible Hulk, Hellboy II: the Golden Army,* and the *Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* to be hitting hi-def before the end of the year.

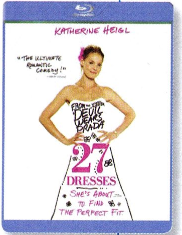
AND FOR THE LADIES

A serial bridesmaid and a serial killer, but unfortunately, not in the same movie.

27 Dresses

PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** PG-13

Amicably likeable and less sickly sweet than a lot of romantic comedies out there, *27 Dresses* gets by thanks to its remarkably gruff and rude male love interest lead and humorously randy best friend. The movie doesn't take many chances otherwise, but there's a steady stream of laughs throughout, making *27 Dresses* one of the more tolerable examples of its recent ilk.


KATHERINE HEIGL
"THE ULTIMATE ROMANTIC COMEDY!"
FROM THE WRITER OF DEVIL WEARS PRADA
27 DRESSES
SHE'S ABOUT TO FIND THE PERFECT FIT.

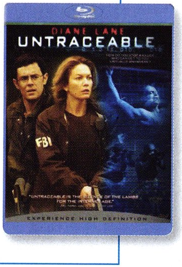
MOVIES ★★★

EXTRAS ★★★

Untraceable

PRICE: $38.96 **RATED:** R

If the Lifetime channel made a serial killer/torture porn flick, it would be *Untraceable.* Diane Lane plays a strong, feminine lead, her rough-and-tumble male cop sidekick is hard and chiseled, yet sensitive, and the plot is strictly by-the-numbers. *Untraceable* isn't terrible though. Its depiction of Internet and computer technology is slightly more realistic than usual, the characters are likeable if clichéd, and it certainly makes its point about humanity's insatiable appetite for public violence more eloquently than, say, the stupidly hypocritical *Condemned.* Extras are reasonably beefy as well, though not likely to get much use.



MOVIES ★★⯪

EXTRAS ★★★

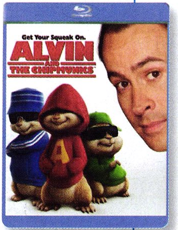
KIDS KORNER

You know you promised your wife that the PS3 would be "for the kids, too." It's time to pay the piper.

Alvin and the Chipmunks

PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** PG

It's hard not to groan at the mere idea of a live-action rendition of the perpetual *Alvin and the Chipmunks* cartoon, but if you've got young 'uns around, this is a shockingly adept and engaging kid's flick. Enough of the jokes work on an adult level, and despite the painfully clichéd plot, *Alvin and the Chipmunks* slyly takes on more mature issues of parenthood, morality, and commitment phobia between all the rodent antics. Granted, the sound of the chipmunks singing is akin to nails on a blackboard, and the extras are incredibly light, but this is a great choice for a family friendly movie.



MOVIES ★★★⯪

EXTRAS ★★

Enchanted

PRICE: $34.99 **RATED:** PG

While still in preview stage, *Enchanted* showed real potential. It looked like a sincere and snide outlet for Disney to make fun of all the girlie clichés the company has proliferated over the years. It's a great concept—a stereotypical Disney princess gets thrust into the real world where dreams don't come true. There are a few gem gags here—such as the vermin-twist on animals cleaning house—but the movie ends up not getting its own joke, and by the end, viewers are left with an even more clichéd than usual princess movie that just happens to be live-action. Extras are middling as well, though the sound and picture quality are excellent.

Blu-ray Disc
Walt Disney
Enchanted
A NEW DISNEY CLASSIC WITH A TWIST.
1080p HIGH DEFINITION

MOVIES ★⯪

EXTRAS ★★

WE ALL HAVE OUR DEMONS... HIS ARE JUST A BIT MORE OBVIOUS

HELLBOY™

THE SCIENCE OF EVIL

*PLAYSTATION®3 and
Xbox 360® screens shown

XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE
HELLBOY
THE SCIENCE OF EVIL
PSP
PLAYSTATION 3
KONAMI

**Available
June 24, 2008**

TEEN
T
Blood and Gore
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

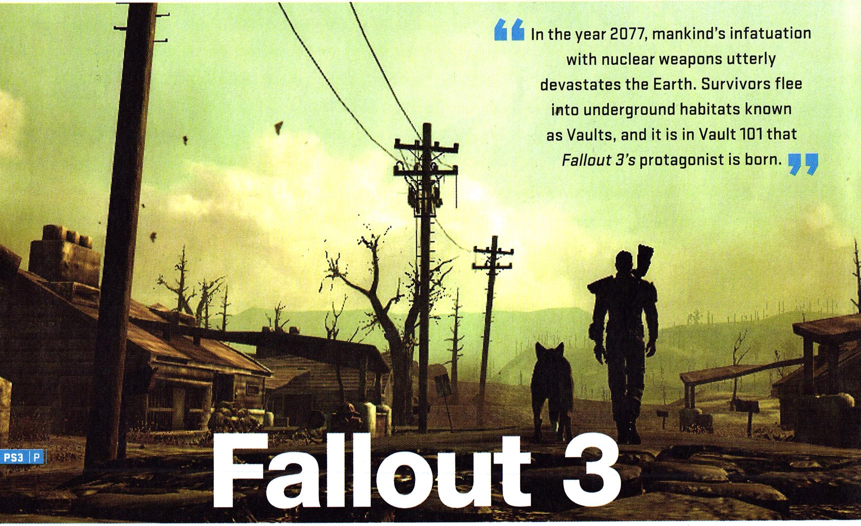
Available for the PLAYSTATION®3
computer entertainment system and the
PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system.

XBOX 360 LIVE

KROME STUDIOS

Hellboy™ Software © 2008 Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. KONAMI is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. Motion Picture © 2004 Revolution Studios Distribution Company, LLC. All rights reserved. Hellboy is a trademark of Revolution Studios Distribution Company, LLC and is used under license b
Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by KROME STUDIOS. KROME STUDIOS and the Krome Studios logo are trademarks of Krome Studios Pty Ltd. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from
Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. PSP® system Memory Stick Duo may be required (sold separately). The rating icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

KONAMI
www.konami.com

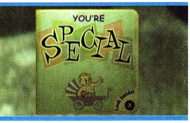


> In the year 2077, mankind's infatuation with nuclear weapons utterly devastates the Earth. Survivors flee into underground habitats known as Vaults, and it is in Vault 101 that *Fallout 3's* protagonist is born.

Fallout 3

The end of the world never looked so good

PS3 **AVAILABLE:** Holiday **GENRE:** RPG **PUBLISHER:** Bethesda **DEVELOPER:** Bethesda



Gamers are a finicky bunch—take on a franchise that has a critically-storied, fan-adored history and you'd better be on your A game. So developer (and new owner) of the *Fallout* franchise, Bethesda Softworks, has multiple sources of expectation applying pressure to ensure that fan service is delivered and that this post-apocalyptic next-gen RPG honors the style, humor, and intensity of its forebears.

"We're the guys who did *Oblivion,* and it was well received, so there's a lot of pressure to follow that," says Pete Hines, Bethesda's VP of Public Relations. Turning to a much-loved PC franchise that hasn't seen the light of day since 1998's *Fallout 2* (we're consciously and conveniently ignoring *Tactics* and *Brotherhood of Steel)* might not be the most obvious move, but from what we've already seen, the style, mechanics of the game design, and comedy fit squarely with Bethesda's tried and true strengths.

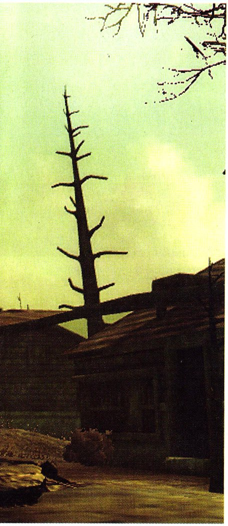
"War. War Never Changes."

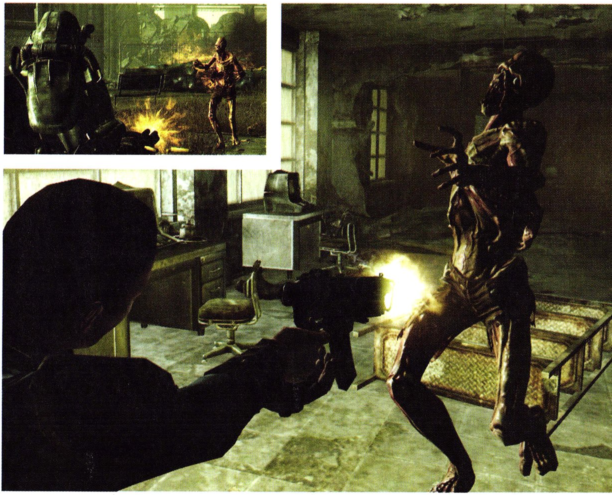
Purists will be pleased to know that *Fallout 3's* back-story is similar to that of its predecessors. In the year 2077, mankind's infatuation with nuclear weapons utterly devastates the Earth. Survivors flee into underground habitats known as Vaults, and it is in Vault 101 that *Fallout 3's* protagonist is born.

Character creation begins at birth, which sees the newborn character's father telling his wife that the baby's gender is exactly what they'd hoped for. Which gender? That's up to you. The child's name? Again, that's your call. Your father then wonders, as all parents do, what his child will look like when he grows up. This prompts you to choose physical features such as skin color, hairstyle, and more. Not into superficialities? Press the randomize button.

To lend an added dose of authenticity, your father will bear a striking resemblance to your finished avatar.

In addition to Ron Perlman reprising his role as narrator, stars such as Liam Neeson, who provides the voice-over for the protagonist's father, will lend their talents to the game.





Familial traits such as ethnicity, build, hair color, and even cheekbones will be shared between father and son—or daughter.

Tragically, your mother succumbs to a fatal cardiac seizure immediately following childbirth and the story fast-forwards one year. Your character is playing with Daddy Dearest who subsequently plops you into your pen and retreats to his office. After unlatching the gate and toddling around the room, you'll happen across *You're SPECIAL!*, an alphabet board book for toddlers. Rather than teaching 'A' is for apple, the book allows you to spread experience points across stats designated by each letter of "special": strength, perception, endurance, charisma, intelligence, agility, and luck.

Fast forward again, this time to your 10th birthday party. Vault 101's Overseer presents you with the PIP-Boy, a small computer system used to track all vital statistics: inventory, health, weapons, quests...you name it, the PIPBoy tracks it. The birthday party also introduces you to quests. One of your guests, a little old lady, gives you a sweet roll. It doesn't take long for the Vault's resident bully to appear and claim the sweet roll as his own. What do you want to do? Refuse; give it to him; spit on it and *then* give it to him; or something else entirely? Choose wisely, because from this point forward, each of your actions determines your character's personality—and your game-concluding cinematic.

Play nice with the kids

Vault 101's denizens are infamous for never venturing out into the world, so you can imagine the stir that ensues when your father suddenly vanishes. The Overseer naturally assumes that you, now 19 years old, had something to do with his disappearance. You're just as stunned as everybody else, but that's not exactly what the boss believes. As the situation turns ugly, it's time to escape. But how? That depends on how your character treated others during his youth. If you were nice to your friends, they'll help you find a way out. If you were a jerk, you're on your own.

Once you've stepped out of the Vault, the real game begins. Do you want to dig through the rubble of Washington, D.C., and do some exploring, or set off after your father?

Fallout veterans will be happy to know that you'll inevitably cross paths with Dogmeat, the canine companion from the original game, though the when and where of this meeting is random. Dogmeat will prove to be a capable ally in battle, but he *can* die, so it'll behoove you to watch over your new best friend.

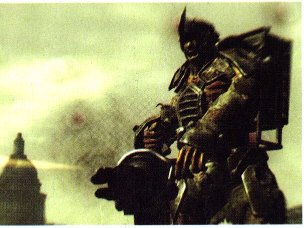
Ghoulish Combat

While adventure-style decision making and RPG elements propel the story and character development, you shouldn't underestimate the impact of combat. Inside a derelict building swarming with Ghouls (humans overly exposed

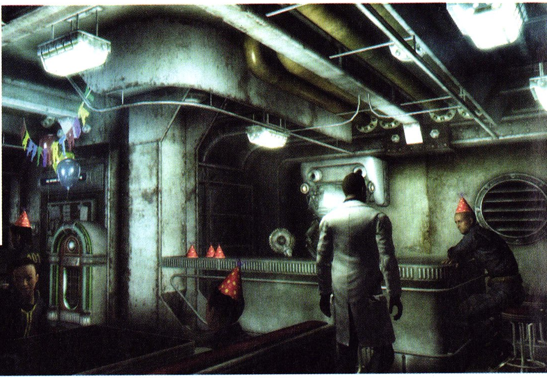
Your reaction to every significant event will be used to determine your ending, of which there are over 500 available. According to Pete Hines, that number may soon climb to higher than 1000.

Man's Best Friend

Make sure you take good care of Dogmeat. In addition to being handy in combat, he's quite a capable hunter as well. If you're in need of food, just order Dogmeat to find you something scrumptious. He'll find his way back to you with something raw and bloody clamped in his jaws.



One gun, appropriately dubbed Fatman, let's you launch mini-nukes. Just be careful: the detonation leaves radiation behind, which harms you as well as your enemies.



Fallout 3 can be played from a first- or third-person perspective. The camera can be fully rotated around your character, which is perfect for showing off your gear.

to radioactivity) one of the creatures ambushed our character. With a single button tap the action was paused, freezing the creature in mid-jump courtesy of the Vault-tec Assisted Targeting System or V.A.T.S. for short. By highlighting a body part—providing you have the necessary Action Points (AP) to make the shot—and pressing the V.A.T.S. button again, you can execute an attack if the to-hit percentage displayed next to your designated body part is high enough. One crippled arm and severed leg later, the Ghoul had been defeated and we moved on.

The V.A.T.S. system is optional; it's best used to weaken enemies before using regular combat techniques to finish them. Our next opponent was a Glowing One, a Ghoul that uses waves of radiation to attack and also heal nearby enemies. Each V.A.T.S. attack is shown cinematically; in this instance by a close-up of the creature's arm detaching in a spray of blood.

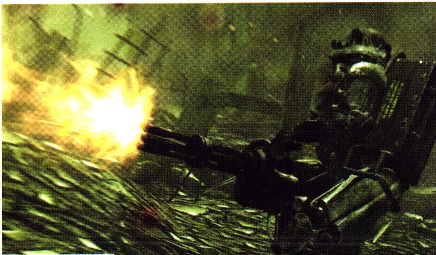
Of course, this system can damage you, too, and checking the PIPBoy for a health status update, it was clear that the wobbling aim and blurry vision was caused by damage to our head and arm. The ailments were rectified via a quick stim shot, but more severe problems will probably not be so easy to fix.

Power to the People

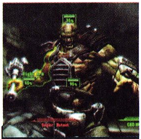
Inside the desecrated Washington Mall our character was now decked out in body armor and was wielding a powerful minigun. Hopping into a trench we followed its zigzag path toward the shattered husk of the White House.

Rigged grenades began popping like flashbulbs as heavily armored foes burst onto the scene. Rockets careened into the armor, causing us to stumble. Demonstrating that Ghouls aren't stupid just because radioactivity melted their brains, one rushed forward from the background, scooped up a fallen comrade's minigun, and began unleashing lead in our direction.

Several enemy waves later, this all-too-short experience in the wasteland was over. "We have to do this right, we have to do justice to this thing we love," concluded Hines of Bethesda's commitment to this amazing franchise. With the team talent and this level of honored appreciation of the game's legacy, we fully expect that justice will be served. David Craddock



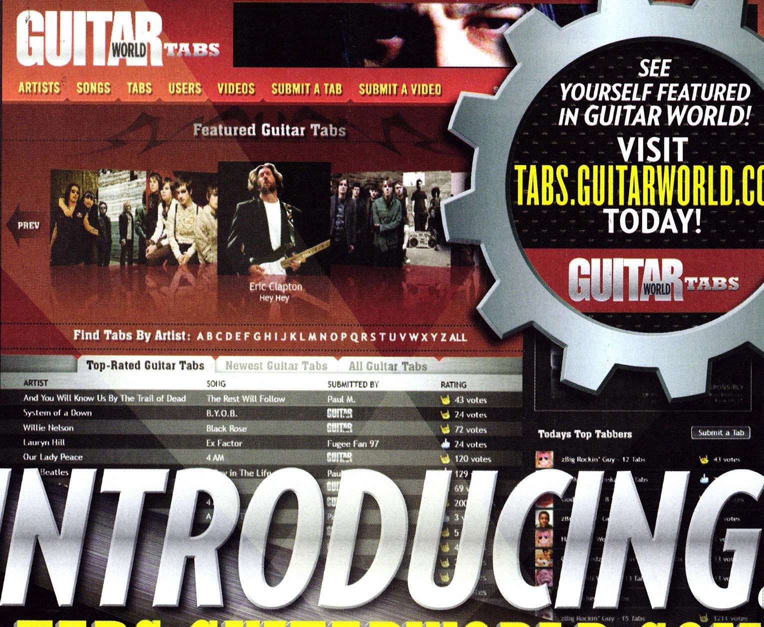
Dressing like a walking tank is fun, but the heavier you are, the less you can carry.



V.A.T.S. the Deal with V.A.T.S.?

Why should you bother using V.A.T.S.? Strategy, that's why. Fighting one or two weak foes at a time isn't a situation that calls for V.A.T.S., but when you enter a room full of enemies, you'll want to incapacitate as many as possible before confronting them directly. In addition, players who struggle with real-time aiming will absolutely love V.A.T.S.—the closer you are, the higher your to-hit percentage will be.

Remember, using V.A.T.S. requires Action Points (AP). AP can be regained by not using weapons. Duck into a corner when you need to recharge, then come out with guns blazing.


GUITAR WORLD TABS
ARTISTS SONGS TABS USERS VIDEOS SUBMIT A TAB SUBMIT A VIDEO
Featured Guitar Tabs
PREV
Eric Clapton
Hey Hey
Find Tabs By Artist: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z ALL
Top-Rated Guitar Tabs
Newest Guitar Tabs
All Guitar Tabs
Todays Top Tabbers
Submit a Tab

ARTIST	SONG	SUBMITTED BY	RATING
And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead	The Rest Will Follow	Paul M.	43 votes
System of a Down	B.Y.O.B.	GUITAR	24 votes
Willie Nelson	Black Rose	GUITAR	72 votes
Lauryn Hill	Ex Factor	Fugee Fan 97	24 votes
Our Lady Peace	4 AM	GUITAR	120 votes
Beatles	in The Life	Pau	129

Todays Top Tabbers	
zBig Rockin' Guy - 12 Tabs	43 votes
zBig Rockin' Guy - 15 Tabs	1211 votes

SEE YOURSELF FEATURED IN GUITAR WORLD!

VISIT TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM TODAY!

GUITAR WORLD TABS

INTRODUCING!

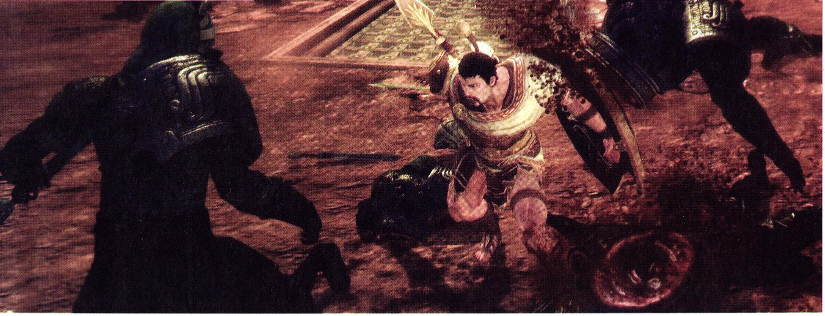
TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM

- ✪ **AUTHENTIC GUITAR WORLD TABS**
  THE GOLD STANDARD OF GUITAR TRANSCRIPTIONS ONLINE NOW!
- ✪ **USER-GENERATED TABS**
  QUALITY TABS FROM THE TRUSTED GUITAR WORLD COMMUNITY
- ✪ **GUITARISTS' SOCIAL NETWORK**
  JOIN TODAY! GUITAR WORLD'S COMMUNITY OF EXPERT PLAYERS
- ✪ **WEB'S BEST USER/ARTIST VIDEOS**
  PERFORMANCE VIDEOS SUBMITTED BY THE COMMUNITY

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

GUITAR WORLD TABS

Proud, weak-heeled, and beloved champion of the Mycenae arena, Achilles will join you if you can defeat him.



Bodies are broken into parts (head, torso, arms, legs), which move independently of each other. Battle animations aren't pre-rendered, so you'll never see the same exact moves twice.

When Jason's party members are far away, they'll fight independently. But when they're close, they'll set up combos for you.

Rise of the Argonauts

Ancient gods, modern gameplay

PS3 | P

PS3 **AVAILABLE:** September **GENRE:** Action RPG **PUBLISHER:** Codemasters **DEVELOPER:** Liquid Entertainment

The last time we visited ancient Greece a la *Rise of the Argonauts,* we found an action-RPG-in-the-making that impressed us with its ambition and dazzled us with its real-time battle engine. The developers hinted at a new interpretation of classic Greek mythology and promised cinema-quality animations. But their ultimate goal? Create an ever-immersive, character-driven experience.

In our latest eyes-only visit to Jason's world—in which he's desperately searching for the Golden Fleece to revive his deceased bride—Liquid Entertainment was determined to illustrate that point. Every detail in *Argonauts* bows to the goal of immersion, beginning with the lack of an on-screen user interface. No health bars, no mini-map…it'll just be you and the world. During battles, you'll gauge your condition via the redness of the screen (like in some first-person shooters) and access special moves (like a spatial disruption called Gates of Tartarus that sucks anyone who comes too close straight to the underworld) with a tap of the D-pad.

Even leveling up and earning new skills will be linked to the story. Rather than accumulating experience points, you'll look to the gods for your growth. But a simple sacrifice won't curry you favor. Instead, you'll have to dedicate your "great deeds" (like killing 10 enemies within a time limit or defeating mini-bosses) to the deity of your choosing. Depending on which god you worship, you'll progress along different skill trees and acquire new powers. Even your dialogue choices will be associated with a god, turning every conversation into an opportunity to customize your character.

Liquid is adamant about tying every last gameplay element to the story world. That's why you won't find any Bows of Smiting +7 or Generic Leather Greaves in *Argonauts.* Weapons and armor will be doled out according to story events. Take the Mycenae arena, for example: You won't grab Gladiator Armor pieces off nearby racks; instead, a set will be given to you by the mythological blacksmith Daedalus, before you enter into battle. By making the story all-important and by having your choices affect the world around you, Liquid's hope is that *Argonaut* will leave a lasting, perhaps even an epic, impact.

Teresa Dun

50% Action, 50% RPG

Combat will be targeted toward casual action folks, with helpful tricks like a fluid auto lock-on system and short, intuitive combos. More advanced players can test their skills by focusing on one-shot kills (the two attacks, "wound" and "execute," are timing-based). Remember, enemies don't have health bars—not even hidden ones. Damage is contextual, so if you toss a spear into an enemy's skull, he'll die instantly. If you wound him with successive cuts on his right arm, he'll have a harder time lifting his axe to attack you.

The Soldiers Remain the Sa

METAL GEAR SOLID 4
GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
PLAYSTATION 3
MATURE 17+
M
ESRB
KONAMI

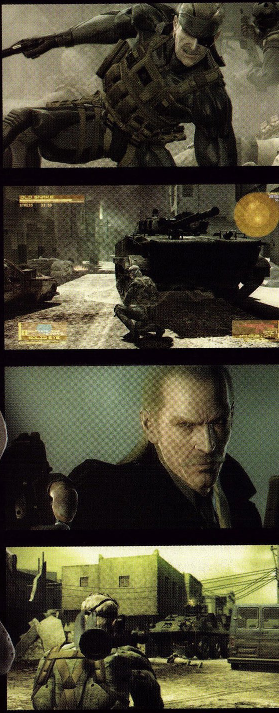
Available
6.12.08

COMING EXCLUSIVELY O
computer enterta

PLAYST

© 1987 2008 Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "META
a registered trademark of KONAMI CORP

me.



METAL GEAR SOLID® 4

GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

ON THE PLAYSTATION®3
inment system

ATION® 3

KONAMI

KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

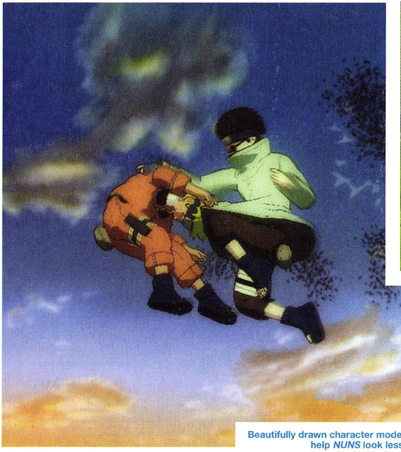
www.konami.com

MATURE 17+
M™
Blood
Crude Humor
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB

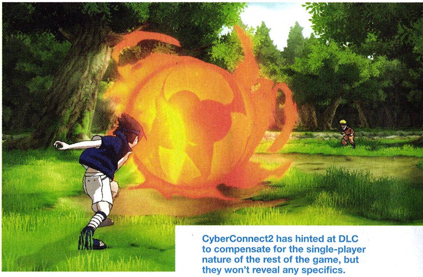
L GEAR" and "METAL GEAR SOLID" and "GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. Published by Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. KONAMI is
ORATION. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The rating icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

The Face of War
Has Changed.

Audio elitists can rest assured. *NUNS* can be played with the Japanese audio track featuring all of the original voice actors.



Beautifully drawn character models and smoothly animated movement help *NUNS* look less like a game and more like an anime.



CyberConnect2 has hinted at DLC to compensate for the single-player nature of the rest of the game, but they won't reveal any specifics.

Naruto:

Ultimate Ninja Storm

A fever of orange jumpsuits, metallic headbands, and chakra. No, it's not the '70s, it's *Naruto!*

PS3 AVAILABLE: October GENRE: Fighting PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai DEVELOPER: CyberConnect2

The barrier dividing anime and game has been shattered. According to our in-person interview with Hiroshi Matsuyama, the President of CyberConnect2, *Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm* won't be the same fighting game we've already played half a dozen times. Though the familiar Battle mode will be included, the focus of *NUNS* is on a Mission mode that lets you play through episodes one through 135 of the *Naruto* anime. You'll experience first hand all the major events, from the first Chunin exam to the Chunin finals, and you'll earn skills and meet new characters (Rock Lee, Gaara) the same way Naruto did in the anime. Best of all, thanks to graphical prowess of the PS3, the visual differentiation between anime and game will have been removed, a fact that makes the amiable Matsuyama beam with excitement.

So, *Naruto* fans, take off those Konoha Forehead Protectors and put away those ninja wristbands, because with *NUNS,* you can now finally *become* Naruto. Ittai!

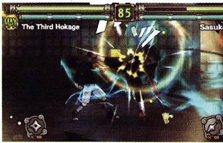
Cheekiness aside, the game looks impressive. CyberConnect2 decided to sacrifice multiplayer (the only group play is offline one-on-one versus) for a real-time camera that follows characters as they traverse destructible, three-dimensional environments. Combat has been tweaked, and each of the 25 playable characters will have a powerful, graphically impressive special move (which you'll later be able to customize). You can also choose two support characters before you battle. When summoned, they'll perform a single move, and you'll have to wait a while before you can use them again. Boss battles, a variety of mission objectives, and *God of War*-style timed button-pressing sequences round out the combat in *NUNS,* though these last features will only be found in the Mission mode.

So if you're a *Naruto* fan, you'd better start brushing up on the anime's early combat moves. You'll need to know them, as this looks to be the series' most ambitious fighting title yet.

Teresa Dun

Naruto Ultimate Heroes 2:

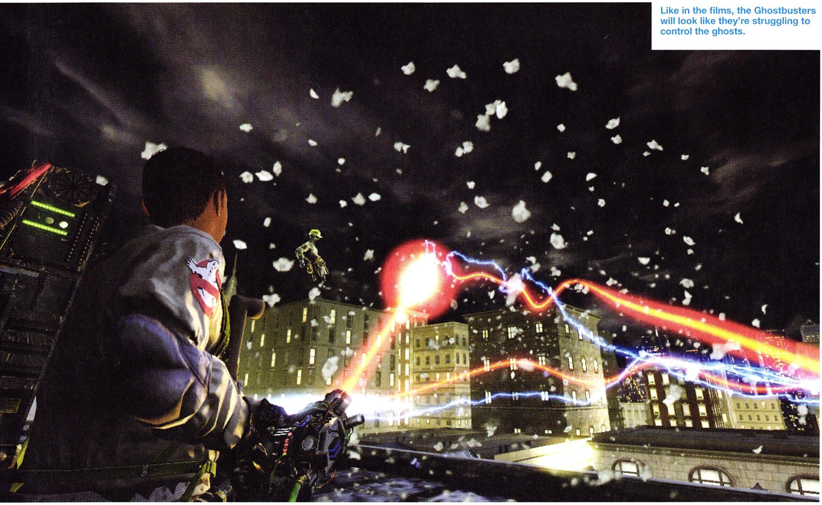
The Phantom Fortress



PSP AVAILABLE: June
GENRE: Fighting
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai
DEVELOPER: Bandai

Maybe developers fear the marketplace is becoming flooded with fighting games, because they're taking pains to add extra features. Perhaps that's why *Naruto Ultimate Heroes 2* includes an RPG-esque Mugenjo mode to complement its original 3v3 Heroes mode. In Mugenjo mode, you'll lead Naruto and his ninja colleagues through a 100-floor tower, collecting randomly generated scrolls along the way. On every floor, you'll have to use one of those scrolls, which will unlock one of several mini-games (including versions of slots, Simon Says, *Naruto* trivia, and of course, battles) that you'll need to beat to progress. Don't worry, it's not pointless—a sometimes voice-acted, sometimes fully animated story will accompany your trek to the top of the tower.

P | PS3
P | PSP



Like in the films, the Ghostbusters will look like they're struggling to control the ghosts.

PS3 | P

Ghostbusters

First Look Preview

Ectoplasmic ecstasy in the making

PS3 AVAILABLE: October GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Sierra DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality

Everybody knows the rule: don't cross the streams. What happens if you do? The developers at Terminal Reality won't say, but they promise you'll know it when you see it. Which makes us wonder: could crossing the streams spark an event as mind-boggling and odd as that of releasing a game a full quarter century after the movie it's based on made its theatrical debut?

We won't know for sure until *Ghostbuster*'s Halloween release, when we can experiment with our own stream-crossing, but lingering fondness for the movie franchise compels us to uncover all the details we can.

Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis are penning the game story and script. They'll also be voicing their original characters along with Ernie Hudson. And despite early speculation to the contrary, Bill Murray is indeed in the game, which means the entire original *Ghostbusters* team will be involved.

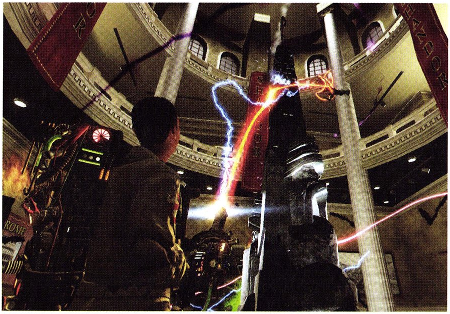
The game is set in 1991, with the storyline picking up soon after the second film's end. The Ghostbusters have become so successful after saving the city (again) that they've decided to franchise and bust ghosts across the entire United States. And you're their first franchise trainee.

Terminal Reality showed us a stage with the Ghostbusters atop a roof, battling a collection of angry construction-worker ghosts hidden in roof ventilators. Wearing a Proton Pack and displayed from a third-person perspective, our trainee shot proton streams at the haunted ventilators to lure out the poltergeists. Once in the open, the spirits struggled to break free, with our hero constantly catching the ghosts in his beam and then slamming them to the floor to daze them. If fellow Ghostbusters (Peter, Raymond, or whoever was accompanying him on the mission) were in the vicinity, they assisted by aiming their proton

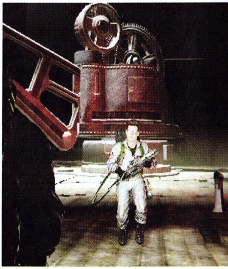
Bustin' Ghosts with Buddies

The *Ghostbusters* story campaign will be single-player only, but special co-op scenarios are in the works in which you'll battle against hordes of ghosts with a partner. In other multiplayer modes, you'll compete with others to see who can catch the most ghosts or race to destroy the most objects in an environment where everything is possessed.

Destruction is pricey. Luckily, it's the city that gets billed for everything you destroy while you get paid for the ghosts you catch.


The green strips on the Proton Pack depict your life. The weapons you see "stored" on the Pack show what you have available to use.

The ghost may wave, but we still gotta take him down.


Even in virtual form, Aykroyd looks so good in his Ghostbusters outfit that it gives us tingles. Is that weird?

streams at the rowdy ghosts, to make them more malleable. Or, they threw ghost traps on the ground to capture dazed spirits.

Though you won't be able to directly control any of the main Ghostbusters (they do outrank you, after all), they'll automatically work with you if they see you need help. But if they're, say, on the other side of the roof? Then you're on your own, buddy.

The Proton Packs we saw on the Ghostbusters are more than just weapons. They also serve as the game's user interface. On the Proton Pack, you'll be able to see stats like health, as well as which weapons are available to you. For example, if you switch from the proton stream to the slime gun, your Proton Pack's graphics will change to reflect that.

Another nice touch that we're looking forward to is the game's soundtrack. Using a mix of new material, music from the films (including the awesome theme song, which no *Ghostbusters* game should be without,) and previously unutilized music from the original films, the game's score should recreate the movies' wacky atmosphere perfectly.

With so many of the film's original elements included—from writers to cast to enemies (we saw glimpses of the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man and we already know Slimer is present) to gadgets to music—*Ghostbusters* has all the pieces in place to appease and please its legion of fans. Either that, or cause total protonic reversal. Teresa Dun

Paranormal Technology

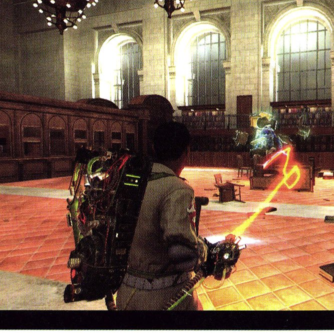
Proton Packs, Slime Blowers, unusual ghosts, mobs of frightened citizens and cheering onlookers…some of the object and creature movement in *Ghostbusters* is so unusual that the crew at Terminal Reality built a new physics engine specifically to cater to it. They gave us a taste of the engine's capabilities in some tech demos.

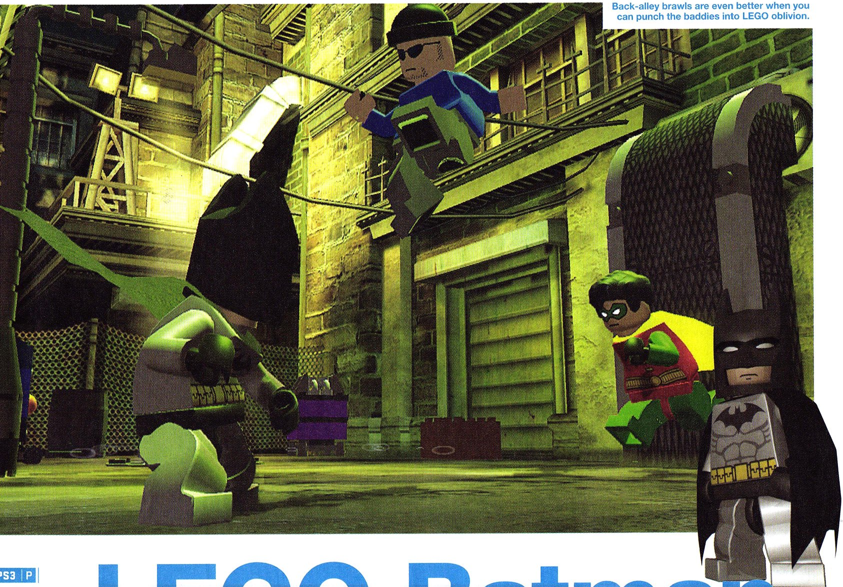
The first took place in the New York Public Library's reading room, complete with 2,000 individual objects, all breakable. The devs fired proton streams at tables, lamps, books, and chairs to show us how they bounced backward from the force, pushed into other objects, or flew into the air to crash land into other objects. We didn't notice any lag, and the movement certainly looked impressive. Objects seemed to possess the right heft. The damage you do is supposedly permanent, too, but we wonder how NY residents will react to a permanently decimated library.

To demo the slime gun, the devs dropped a pile of cars into the room. The gun shoots goo that looked like silly string and worked like an industrial strength magnet. It only took a second to snap a car to the ceiling and another to snap a second car to the first one, though both vehicles drooped because of the extra weight.

Next, they took us to a street scene, where they showed 1,000 people walking at once. They each had individual AI, walked at different speeds, and reacted differently to situations. When a Ghostbuster ran through the crowd, some people jumped out of the way, others stayed nearby to watch, and still others refused to budge.

From what we saw, the engine wasn't revolutionary, but it portrayed Ghostbusters-related activities well enough that we believe it'll be more than sufficient for the needs of this game. Plus, the fact that a new engine was even built for this game shows that the devs don't want it to become just another lackluster movie tie-in.





Back-alley brawls are even better when you can punch the baddies into LEGO oblivion.

PS3 | P

LEGO Batman

Meet the world's greatest LEGO detective

PS3 **AVAILABLE:** June **GENRE:** Action adventure
PUBLISHER: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment **DEVELOPER:** Traveller's Tales

Life is full of eureka moments. Take *LEGO Star Wars,* for example. Whodda thunk it'd make for such a brilliant beginning to a now-revered franchise? And yet, like so many other classic combos, LEGO and *Star Wars* defied the odds to form a delightful duo that's charmed millions of gamers worldwide.

Naturally, that leads to spinoffs and franchise extensions. *Indiana Jones* is an obvious fit, being another Lucas property. (For our take on that game, flip ahead to page 76.) But truth be told, we'd never have pegged Batman as the third blockhead to become immortalized in virtual bricks. Granted, we've passed by those nifty Batman LEGO kits in the toy aisle at Target en route to stocking up on our sundries, but still, the Caped Crusader is too gritty, dark, and urban for what's supposed to be an all-ages romp—or so we thought.

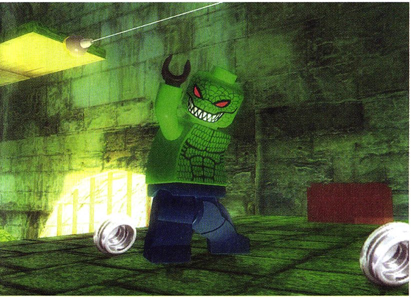
Yet here we are, and we can't help but shout "Eureka!" Because *LEGO Batman* is looking like it might just be coolest LEGO videogame of them all.

Escape from Arkham Asylum

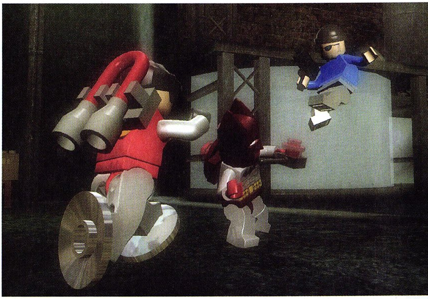
So what makes the Dark Knight a perfect fit for this crossover franchise? Perhaps it's the fact that like Bruce Wayne himself, the *Batman* universe has several distinct faces, all of which appeal to different demographics. "Older gamers tend to be into the darker comics and younger ones into the animated series," notes Loz Doyle, lead producer at developer Traveller's Tales. "But then there's a huge crossover in the movies, which will have been

LEGO Justice League?

Calm down before you get tangled up in your own cape. According to Lead Producer Loz Doyle, there won't be any cameos from other Justice Leaguers. "We feel that there are enough cool characters in Gotham City that we don't need to delve into other areas of the DC Universe," he explains. "We really want to focus on making the *LEGO Batman* characters great." At the same time, Doyle tells us that Traveller's Tales plans to continue to build *LEGO* games, and seeing as how they're now partnered up with DC and Warner Bros., consider this an official request from the official PlayStation publication: Please, please, pretty please—give us *LEGO Justice League!*



Who says LEGO characters can't look menacing? Just the sight of Killer Croc will keep us far away from Gotham City's sewers!



No, those aren't LEGO orthopedics. Robin's wearing his Magnetic boots for maximum magnetic powers.

seen by fans and casual gamers alike. So *LEGO Batman* will offer something for everyone."

Good enough, but which of these Batworlds will the game pull from? After all, the previous *LEGO* games have been based on major motion pictures.

"The story is original, but it begins with a classic Batman theme involving a massive breakout of Gotham City's most dangerous criminals from Arkham Asylum, and it's your job as the Dynamic Duo to get the criminals all back behind bars," Doyle explains. "Further to that, we've broken the story down into three sub-plots, headed up by three super-villains: the Riddler, Penguin, and Joker, who all wreak chaos on Gotham in their own way."

Traveller's Tales worked closely with both DC Comics and Warner Bros. to ensure an authentic Batman experience. Naturally, some liberties had to been taken; the *LEGO* games are known for their sense of humor—something the *Batman* films don't quite share with the *LEGO* franchise (and yes, that includes the spectacularly unfunny George Clooney outing). Expect to see the unique *LEGO* humor remain intact, especially in the game's cutscenes.

Also intact is the astounding range of characters. On one side, you've got Batman and Robin (whom you can control by swapping between them as a single-player or sharing the screen with a pal in co-op play). On the other side, you'll be squaring off against a host of Batvillains, including Scarecrow, Harley Quinn, Killer Croc, and Catwoman (along with the big three mentioned above). As has become customary, you can play through any level once you've beaten it using any character you've already collected—but even better, you'll also be able to play through the story mode as the baddies, complete with all-new criminal objectives.

Suit up for action

Just remember, if you want to save Gotham City, you'll need every tool at your disposal. So which particular tools from Batman's famed utility belt will we see in action? "Batman and Robin have many different Bat gadgets and suits at their disposal to fight crime," Doyle says. "Batman has his Batarang, allowing him to target multiple enemies and LEGO objects. Batman and Robin also have lots of different suits that they can change into, which give new abilities such as Batman's Glide wings and Robin's Magnetic boots."

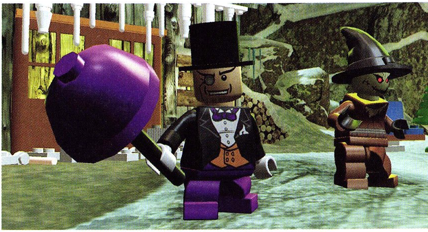
Yes, Batman can soar through the sky and Robin can make for a topnotch fridge magnet. "The new suits really add loads of gameplay features," Doyle promises. "We've made sure there's a good balance between the abilities we've given each character and that they complement each other when it comes to puzzles and combat."

But you won't have to rely solely on your outfits to get around Gotham City. "LEGO has produced such a cool range of LEGO models based on the Batman vehicles, we just had to include them," Doyle says, adding, "they look amazing in the game." (Let's just hope they control better than the clunky rides in all the previous *LEGO* releases.)

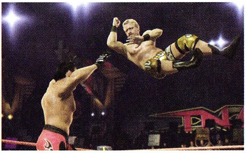
However you get around, you'll be treated to all kinds of puzzles—Batman is a detective, after all. But he's also a superhero, "so we've put a lot of focus on making the combat fantastic," Doyle promises. Makes sense because, as Doyle aptly puts it, "Batman kicks ass"—and so should his game.

Gary Steinman

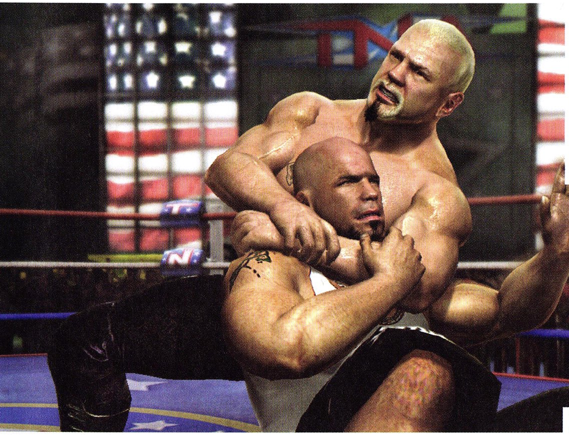
Let's hope Robin remembered not to eat a half-hour prior to this crime-fighting excursion.



If doing good gets you down, try being bad for while. In *LEGO Batman,* you can play through the story as the villains.



Faster, higher, harder—here's hoping that the gameplay offers the same impact.



Yes, it is disturbing that we're fixated on the glistening sweat of half-naked men. But it looks so real...

Although nothing has been finalized, Midway says that the PS3 version of *TNA Impact* could have additional bonus features due to the additional capacity of the Blu-ray disc.

TNA Impact

Hands-On Preview

Two games enter, one game leaves

PS3 **AVAILABLE:** September **GENRE:** Action Sports **PUBLISHER:** Midway Games **DEVELOPER:** Midway L.A.

PS3 | P

Online Impact

Neither THQ nor Midway have divulged much specific information about the online play in *WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2009* and *TNA Impact,* besides the fact that the games *will* have online components. THQ indicates there may be new match types, games modes, and potentially additional WWE stars available for *Smackdown* via DLC. According to Midway, *TNA Impact* focuses on inviting friends for head-to-head online competition with customized match rules and multiple play modes including Tag Team, Ultimate X, and Fatal Four-way to name a few. The potential for DLC is always there, but not confirmed at this time.

Being an up-and-comer is never an easy proposition. But when your competition is a virtual institution of professional wrestling in both the action sports and gaming arena, you've got to work harder, be better, and just plain "bring it".

Total Nonstop Action Wrestling certainly fits that bill with a faster and fiercer brand of action that focuses more on high-flying acrobatic punishment than long-winded theatrics. Midway aims to instill the *TNA Impact* game with that same leaner-and-meaner attitude and our first hands-on experience indicates that it could be a worthy contender.

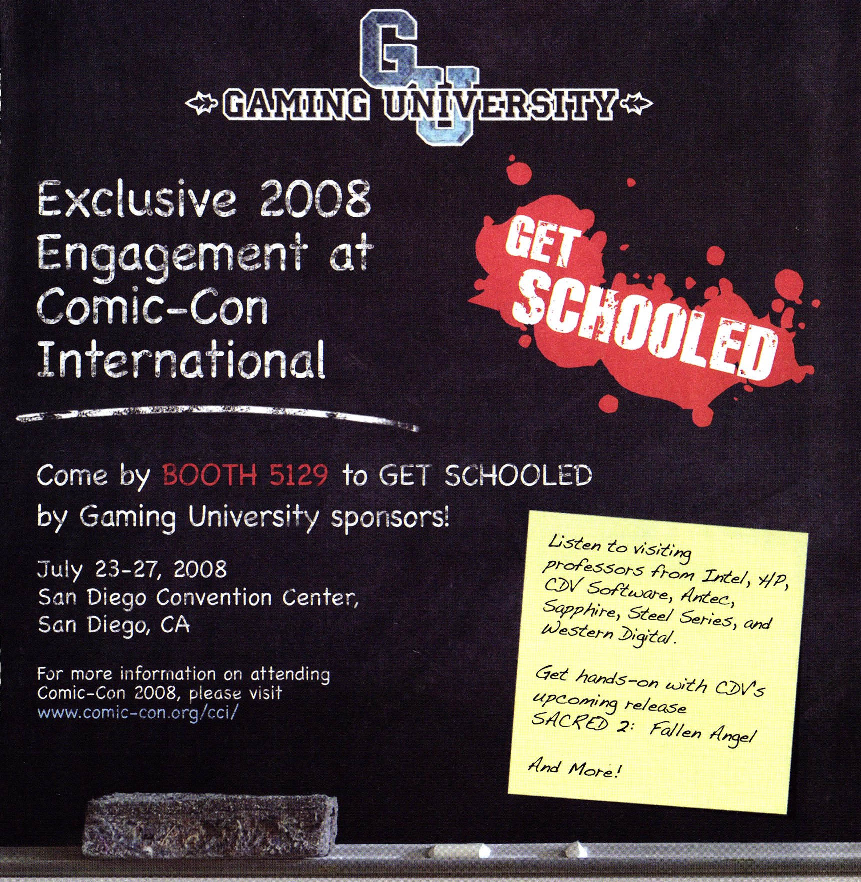
As feature rich as the *WWE*-franchise games are, the gameplay has been criticized (rightly) as sluggish and overly weighted towards the player who gains the initial advantage. *TNA Impact* doesn't have as comprehensive a focus on features such as venues and intro sequences, but the control is considerably more responsive and a vast array of reversals, counters, and blocks ensure that you'll have to remain alert and focused for the duration of a match. Specific body regions can also be targeted to gain a victory or suffer a loss via a mini-game-determined submission.

Of course, the key to great pro wrestling is the entertainment value provided by the wrestlers, and while *WWE* still has the "headliner" advantage, *TNA* doesn't significantly lag behind with familiar marquis names like Kurt Angle, Sting, Booker T, Jeff Jarrett, and Samoa Joe fronting a cast of some 25 wrestlers. Each wrestler model is eerily realistic (seriously, the sweat looks like it could fly off and splatter you) and boasts an arsenal of smooth mo-capped signature and finishing moves.

Much of the action in the eleven different match types will have you venturing up the ropes or outside the six-sided ring to administer some truly brutal punishment. TNA's King-of-the-Hill-inspired Ultimate X match is already a favorite as wrestlers can expect to be repeatedly pulled and flung down from the scaffolds and cables from which a match-winning X icon suspends. There's also a weapon-based (or object-as-weapon) mode called Full Metal Mayhem that intrigues us, but it wasn't playable yet.

The ultimate success of the game could hinge on its Story mode which Midway emphasizes is a fantasy storyline centered on your Create-a-Player character, and not a full-blown season mode. Since hidden venues will primarily be unlocked via this mode, there's good reason to play it, but whether it provides the depth to satisfy hardcore wrestling fans could determine whether *TNA Impact* is a champ or a chump.

Roger Burchill



GU GAMING UNIVERSITY

Exclusive 2008 Engagement at Comic-Con International

GET SCHOOLED

Come by BOOTH 5129 to GET SCHOOLED by Gaming University sponsors!

July 23-27, 2008
San Diego Convention Center,
San Diego, CA

For more information on attending Comic-Con 2008, please visit www.comic-con.org/cci/

Listen to visiting professors from Intel, HP, CDV Software, Antec, Sapphire, Steel Series, and Western Digital.

Get hands-on with CDV's upcoming release SACRED 2: Fallen Angel

And More!

Gaming University is Sponsored By

Antec The Power of You
cdv www.cdv-online.com
hp
intel
NEC
SAPPHIRE
steelseries
WD Western Digital
MAXIMUMPC
PC GAMER

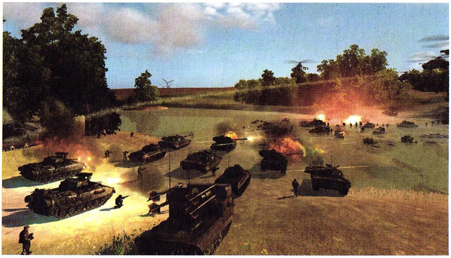
PlayStation Gallery

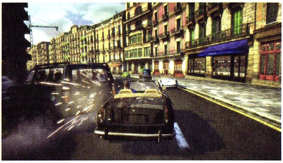
Updates, sneak peeks, works-in-progress

World in Conflict: Soviet Assault

PS3 AVAILABLE: Fall GENRE: Real-time Strategy PUBLISHER: Sierra DEVELOPER: Massive Entertainment

Console systems and real-time strategy titles have avoided each other like spurned lovers in the past due to the difficulty of mapping RTS control schemes on to console controllers. Massive Entertainment thinks it has an elegant solution (which includes optional voice commands), so the studio is bringing its raved-about PC RTS, *World in Conflict,* to the PS3. The game's alternate Cold War history will not only include the U.S.-based campaigns from the original, but new Soviet-side missions as well. A war room will be introduced in the console versions, providing a graphical representation of which side (Soviet or U.S.) is winning more games for each map during multiplayer skirmishes. TD





Wheelman

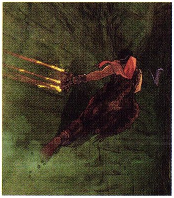
PS3 AVAILABLE: Holiday GENRE: Driving action
PUBLISHER: Midway Games DEVELOPER: Midway Newcastle/Tigon Studios

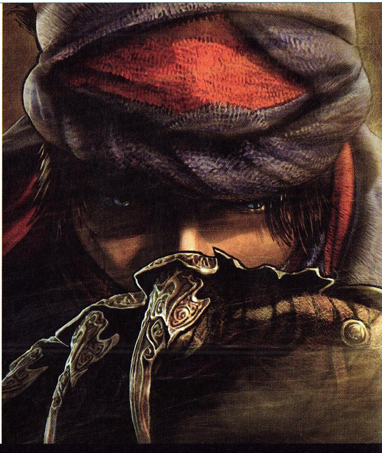
It seems Vin Diesel is serious about this whole game development thing. His company, Tigon Studios, is helping craft a driving-based action game that uses the actor's likeness and voice work in the lead role of Milo Burik, an undercover agent who gets caught up in the criminal shenanigans of European underground organizations. Set on the streets of Barcelona, Burik performs wheelman jobs as part of his infiltration of the gang culture, but has to remain undercover when the local authorities get involved in trying to stop these illegal activities. Crazy car chases, vehicles crashing and smashing through scenery, and performing spectacular flips and jumps are part of the experience. And along the way Vin Diesel provides background to the action, and sets up what needs to be done next to get out of trouble. RS

Prince of Persia

PS3 AVAILABLE: Holiday GENRE: Advenure
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal

Notice how the latest installment of this vaunted, critically acclaimed franchise doesn't sport a subtitle, or even a sequel-indicating Roman numeral? That's because despite the impressive qualities of the PS2 trilogy (along with the beloved 19-year-old original), *Prince of Persia* is pitched as a new beginning for the wall-walking hero. This time around, the born-again hero begins as a man who must learn how to be a prince, and he comes with a host of new abilities to get him there. Capitalizing on the freedom provided by the *Assassin's Creed* engine, the prince can now slide down high cliffs and scale buildings like never before, thanks in part to his handy gauntlet. He'll need it to clear the land of "the Corruption," an evil fog that's contaminating the world, threatening to thrust the environment into eternal darkness. GS

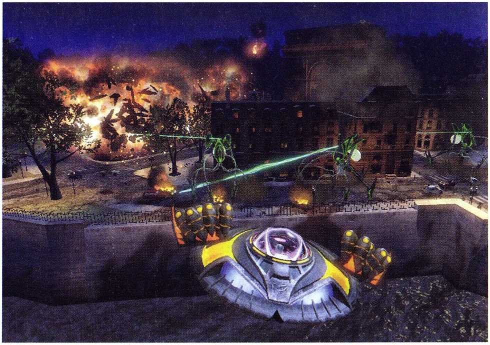


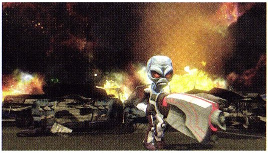


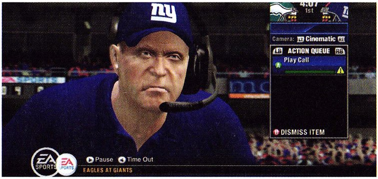
Destroy All Humans:
Path of the Furon

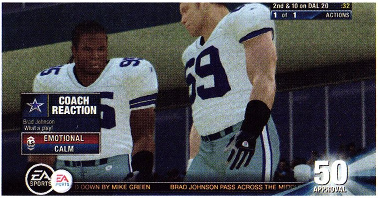
PS3 AVAILABLE: September GENRE: Adventure
PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Sandblast

Can't an alien overlord get a little rest now and then? Apparently, not. As soon as Crypto, the star of the previous *DAH!* titles, settles down to the life of a humble casino owner, he's inexplicably attacked…by the leader of an "Alienology" cult, no less. In his journey for revenge, Crypto will crumble skyscrapers with his Abducto Beam, create spatial anomalies with his Black Hole Gun, do some "gardening" with his Venus Human Trap, and freeze time with his Temporal Fist. In the process, he'll, hmm…destroy all humans in his path. TD









NFL Head Coach 09

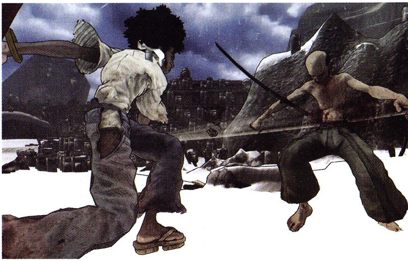
PS3 AVAILABLE: August GENRE: Sports PUBLISHER: EA Sports DEVELOPER: EA Tiburon

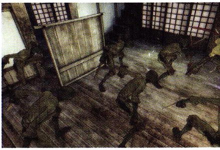
If playing football isn't a cerebral enough experience for you, EA Sports has your fix. As the top banana on any of the 32 NFL teams, you'll face the off- and on-field management challenges from training camp to the Super Bowl. Revel in all the headaches of trades, salary caps, and free agency as you build a competitive team. Constructing an effective playbook is a key attraction as plays can be created, stolen, and shared online. In-game Defining Moments and your Emotional Reaction to key events influence your overall approval rating—if you don't measure up, you can be fired. EA's still debating whether *Head Coach* will be available as a stand-alone game, but if you're on the sidelines about the concept, the game will be bundled with *Madden 09 Collector's Edition* (which imports your playbook automatically). RB

Afro Samurai

PS3 AVAILABLE: Fall GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Games
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai Games

The anime was already quite the mash-up: produced by renowned Japanese studio Gonzo to debut on U.S. TV, starring Samuel Jackson as a hip-hop-infused samurai warrior, *Afro Samurai* broke a few boundaries. And now the game is poised to do the same, with a mix of rhythm, action, and…style? Real-time swordfights are set against a backdrop of hip-hop beats (music by RZA of Wu-Tang Clan), and the baddies will react differently depending on the score. Plans are even in the works for DLC in the form of new soundtracks that'll change up all the animations (and AI) for Afro and his foes! GS



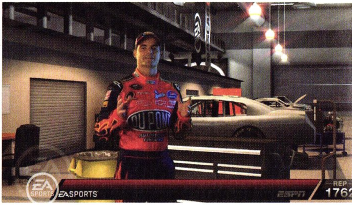


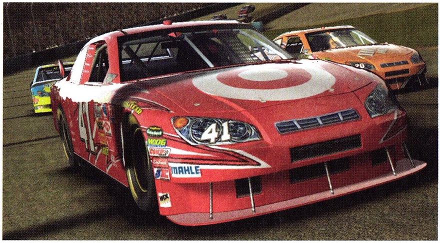
PlayStation Gallery

NASCAR 09

PS3 AVAILABLE: June GENRE: Racing PUBLISHER: EA Sports DEVELOPER: EA Sports

It's time for fans of left turns and yellow flags to get excited as EA Sports prepares its latest *NASCAR* installment to hit the track. This time, Jeff Gordon—he of the Dupont-Pepsi-Sunoco-[insert 15 other sponsor names here] number 24 Chevy—guides your ascension to the top ranks of NASCARdom. The key to victory is acquiring REP (reputation) and Performance Points via on-track success to enhance your advantage over other drivers and cars. REP provides a tangible gameplay advantage that affects how AI opponents react to you and influences matchmaking for the 14-player online races, while Performance Points allow you to massage your car's engine, chassis, aerodynamics, and durability. An interesting *Risk*-like Own A Track mode adds a new dimension by allowing racers to "win" tracks and taunt friends in the process. RB

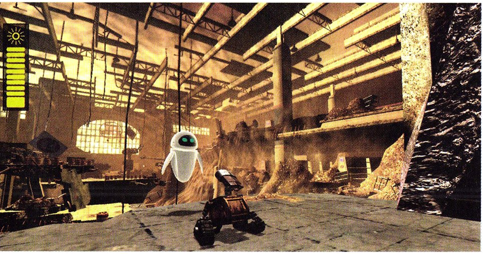


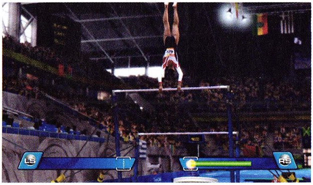


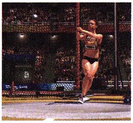
WALL-E

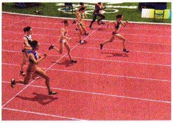
PS3 AVAILABLE: June GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Heavy Iron

He's a simple, square-ish, trash-compacting grunt-bot left behind on an Earth abandoned by humanity as a garbage dump for some 700 years; she's a sophisticated, sleek iPod of an explorer hottie-bot from deep space, checking out what's become of Mother Terra. It's literally a match made in the stars (and is that the ghost of the late, great Douglas Adams I vaguely sense, smirking in the ionosphere?). Heavy Iron Studio's most recent cinema-to-game endeavor is an action/adventure game based on the forthcoming—and doubtless blockbuster—Pixar movie, offering 10 worlds inspired by the film, including trash-mound Earth, deep space, and the massive space station on which resides the complacent, mindlessly-consuming remnants of humanity. The gameplay features solo segments for WALL-E (platforming) and Eve (free-flight and shooting), as well as combo levels where the two must alternate duties. CH





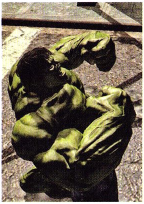


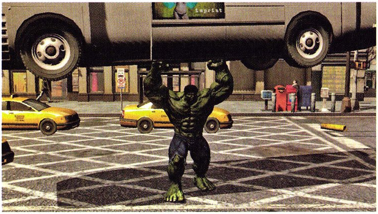


Beijing 2008

PS3 AVAILABLE: June GENRE: Sports PUBLISHER: Sega DEVELOPER: Eurocom

If the Olympics are all about bringing people together, then *Beijing 2008* is set to do its part. In a long-overdue first for an Olympic game, *Beijing* includes the ability to play online with friends around the world. Online leader boards will also be updated to include actual Olympic times and records! With 38 total events, all the usual suspects are covered here—but in another first, Sega is attempting to limit the button-mashing. Instead, you'll waggle the analog stick to sprint to the head of the pack in the 100-meter dash, or execute a series of *DDR*-like button-presses to nail your gymnastics floor routine. GS





The Incredible Hulk

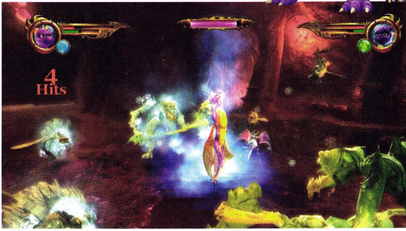
PS3 AVAILABLE: June GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: Edge of Reality

If rage could really translate into power, the PTOM staff would be the most powerful gang in the universe. Unfortunately, rage only works for the Hulk, leaving us to comfort ourselves with this game's promise of "unlimited destruction." Smash anything, and the damage persists (hey, just like the real New York). Use the bits of detritus for a weapon or pile up the rubble to reach new areas. With new scenes exclusive to the game, along with key moments from the movie, *The Incredible Hulk* will smash your PS3 this summer. GS

Legend of Spyro: Darkest Hour

PS2 AVAILABLE: October GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Sierra DEVELOPER: Krome Studios

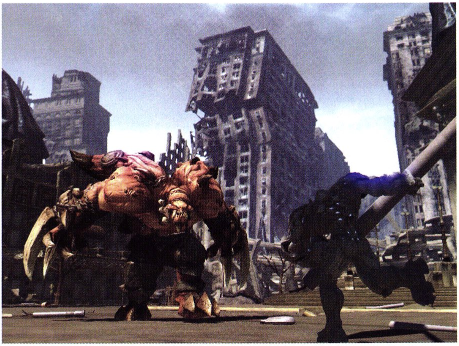
We've received letters from readers lamenting that they're not allowed to play *God of War* because of its Mature rating. Crazy as it may sound, *Spyro* might be a good alternative. The gameplay certainly seems similar: "Orbs" instead of "gems," epic battles and settings, and a mixture of platforming, melee attacks, and spells. The graphics are sparkly, too, which we like, and you can play the entire game co-op (offline only). Plus, Spyro can fly. Really fly, without relying on gryphons. Can Kratos do that? TD



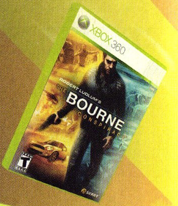
Darksiders: Wrath of War

PS3 AVAILABLE: TBA 2008 GENRE: Action
PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Vigil Games

In the battle between angels and demons, the Four Horsemen are supposed to be objective. But when they're tricked into starting the Apocalypse early and then ruthlessly betrayed, the situation turns personal. *Darksiders* features an open-world environment that feels like a grim, futuristic version of *Assassin's Creed* and gameplay that reminds us of *God of War.* When you consider the involvement of comic book god Joe "Mad" Madureira, we have a hunch that the Horseman War journey will indeed be epic. TD

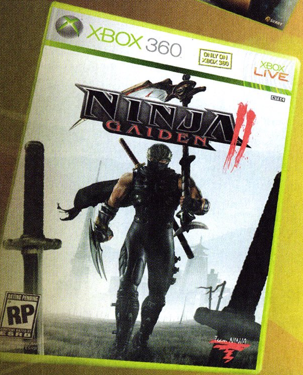


Video Game Rentals Delivered to Your Door


XBOX 360
Robert Ludlum's
BOURNE
CONSPIRACY

Over 5,000 titles

1 | Pick your games online


XBOX 360
ONLY ON XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE
NINJA GAIDEN II
RP
Team NINJA

First Class Mail

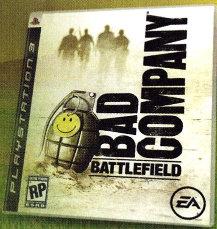
2 | We rush them straight to you

NO Late Fees

3 | Play games as long as you want

Free Shipping

4 | Return games and get more from your list


PLAYSTATION 3
BAD COMPANY
BATTLEFIELD
RP
EA

Start now for just $8.95

www.gamefly.com/pom

© 2008 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

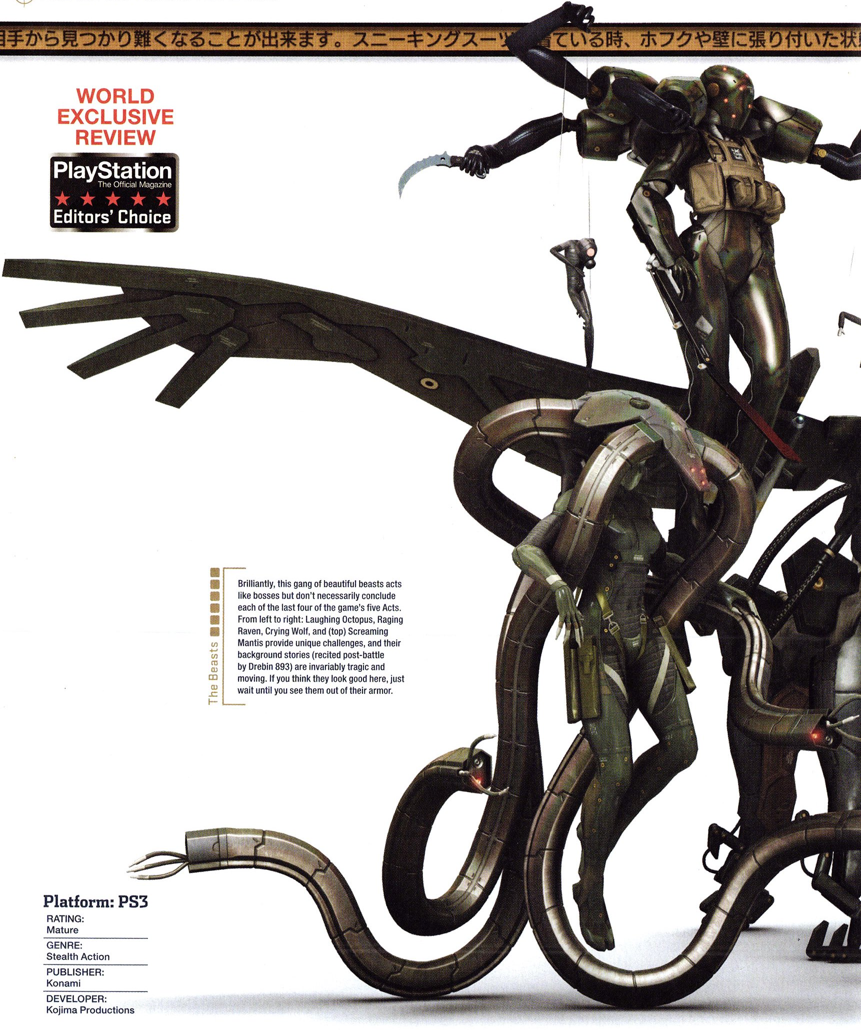
PLAYSTATION 3 PlayStation 2 PSP PlayStation Portable XBOX 360

GF GAMEFLY
PLAYSTATION 3
METAL GEAR SOLID 4
GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
KONAMI
XBOX 360
ALONE IN THE DARK
ATARI
XBOX 360
CIVILIZATION REVOLUTION
OPEN HERE
GF
PO BOX 60018
CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91716-0018
FIRST-CLASS MAIL FLAT
PROCESS ON AFSM 100
1234567
GameFly, Inc.
PO BOX 5326
Culver City, CA 90231-53
GF
XBOX
Wii
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
NINTENDO DS
GAME BOY ADVANCE

手から見つかり難くなることが出来ます。スニーキングスーツ[illegible]ている時、ホフクや壁に張り付いた状

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

PlayStation The Official Magazine ★★★★★ **Editors' Choice**



The Beasts

Brilliantly, this gang of beautiful beasts acts like bosses but don't necessarily conclude each of the last four of the game's five Acts. From left to right: Laughing Octopus, Raging Raven, Crying Wolf, and (top) Screaming Mantis provide unique challenges, and their background stories (recited post-battle by Drebin 893) are invariably tragic and moving. If you think they look good here, just wait until you see them out of their armor.

Platform: PS3

RATING:
Mature

GENRE:
Stealth Action

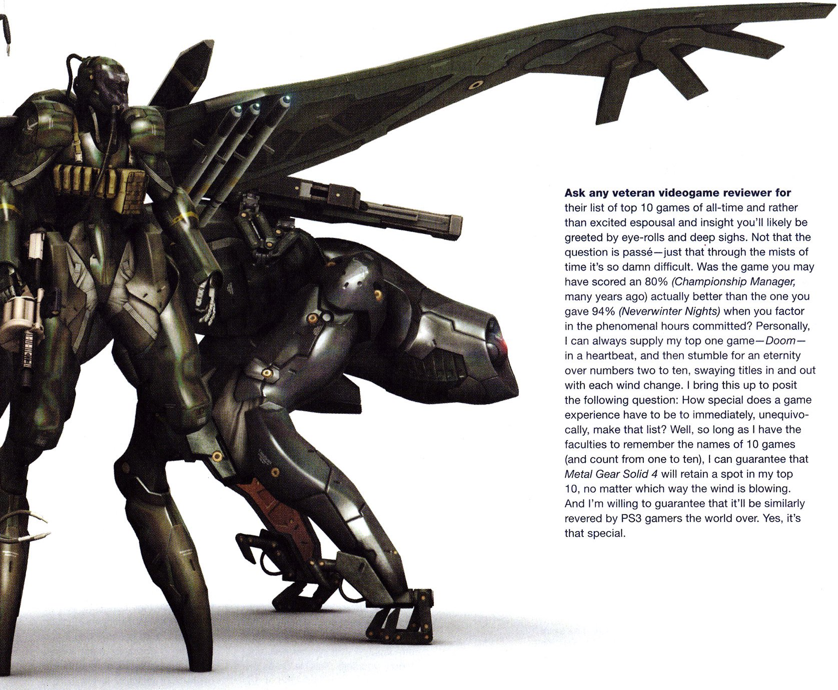
PUBLISHER:
Konami

DEVELOPER:
Kojima Productions

Metal Gear Solid 4

GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

by Rob Smith



Ask any veteran videogame reviewer for their list of top 10 games of all-time and rather than excited espousal and insight you'll likely be greeted by eye-rolls and deep sighs. Not that the question is passé—just that through the mists of time it's so damn difficult. Was the game you may have scored an 80% *(Championship Manager,* many years ago) actually better than the one you gave 94% *(Neverwinter Nights)* when you factor in the phenomenal hours committed? Personally, I can always supply my top one game—*Doom*—in a heartbeat, and then stumble for an eternity over numbers two to ten, swaying titles in and out with each wind change. I bring this up to posit the following question: How special does a game experience have to be to immediately, unequivocally, make that list? Well, so long as I have the faculties to remember the names of 10 games (and count from one to ten), I can guarantee that *Metal Gear Solid 4* will retain a spot in my top 10, no matter which way the wind is blowing. And I'm willing to guarantee that it'll be similarly revered by PS3 gamers the world over. Yes, it's that special.

手から見つかり難くなることが出来ます。スニーキングスーツを着ている時、ホフクや壁に張り付いた状

by Rob Smith

“WAR HAS CHANGED.”

I’ve just beaten *MGS4* for the second time (my first time through was with a not-quite-complete version), and I’m trying my darndest to “keep it real.”

Meryl Silverburgh

The Commander of Rat Patrol 01 has a long history with Snake and the *Metal Gear* series, and Meryl comes of age here as a super-hot badass. Her evolution, including one of the most spectacular, tense, thoughtful, and magnificently choreographed cutscenes in the entire game, is in itself a work of art. Always intriguing, the exposition of her background, and the pitch of her future, truly brings a digital character to life.

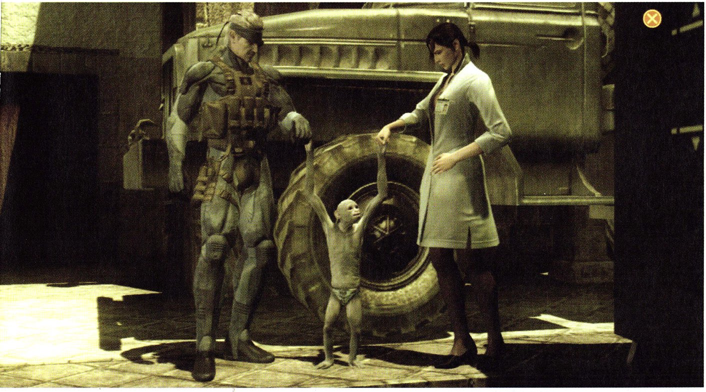
Yet despite my greatest efforts, I feel a gush-fest coming on. I’m keenly aware as I sit to write this review that what I’m about to say needs to matter to anyone who might be inclined to skip a *Metal Gear* game simply because they haven’t been part of the ebullient fanboyism that’s epitomized this franchise’s appeal for the past 20 years. So in that spirit: Hi, my name is Rob, and I’m NOT a *Metal Gear* addict. Playing *MGS2* (on PC) was my biggest involvement with the franchise. I knew some of the characters and background through editing stories. And still, while *MGS4* perfectly wraps up the story entrails left swinging after all the previous games (and in doing so delivers perfectly pitched fan-service), it also has such an open gameplay delivery, and its presentation is so phenomenal, that any self-respecting PS3 owner should consider it their next purchase (assuming *GTA IV* is already on your game shelf).

Surprises begin right from the moment the game starts (after the install process, which also happens before the start of each new act). Just flick around the “channels” and enjoy! That’s even before the scintillating opening cinematic that depicts a warzone familiar to anyone who’s caught even a passing glance of CNN’s coverage of Iraq. The immediate standout is the level of detail in every scene. Whether it’s the motion of soldiers reacting to the thud of bullets, the dust kicking up off trucks, or the jagged edges of buildings bearing the scars of urban warfare, this opening cinematic is sensational. It’s supported by positional audio that refines the atmosphere with clinical precision. Pinch yourself: This is in-engine gameplay, not video—and if the singular purpose is to grab you before you even pull a trigger in anger, congratulations, first mission accomplished.

MGS director/producer/occasional voice-over talent Hideo Kojima has been oft-quoted as a fan—you might say devotee—of Ubisoft’s *Assassin’s Creed*. (Our previous incarnation as *PSM* was the only U.S. magazine invited to attend a Q&A session attended by Kojima and *Assassin’s Creed* producer, Jade Raymond). So Snake’s initial “disguise” paying homage, if not outright identity theft, from *AC* star Altair, is the kind of self-aware statement that has permeated the *Metal Gear* franchise. That theme continues throughout *MGS4* in some of the funniest moments that are oh-so-aware of what the game is and where it fits. Okay, so this last sentence may not make perfect sense, but if it alludes to the dialogue and direction providing occasional comic relief, then, well, you’ll appreciate the moments that deserve a standing ovation!

After a prologue that finally drops the *AC* treatment and introduces the threat of Gekkos (their distinctive “dying cow” wail will prove chilling throughout), we get our first glimpse of a decidedly aged Snake. What looks like Werner’s syndrome (premature aging of the features, organs, and arteries) eventually gets explained as part of the nanomachine background of FOXDIE, with much exposition by the sensationally hot Naomi Hunter. (Note to self: Calm down, she’s not real.)

The Middle East setting is occupied by PMC forces (Private Military Companies) fighting rebels. Who’s right or wrong in this conflict is entirely irrelevant for the purposes of the no-prior-MGS-knowledge-required goal of chasing down Liquid Ocelot. Here you get introduced to the Metal Gear Mk. II, the personality-filled robot that connects you to Otacon (Dr. Hal Emmerich), which you can use to scout ahead if you absolutely, positively must sneak. That’s a great tactic on the highest of the four difficulty levels (a fifth, brutally tough option opens after



Keep your finger over the X button in many cutscenes to view flashbacks to previous games. You score bonus Drebin points for hitting these flashback extras, so it's worth keeping your hands on the controller. Or, just enjoy this touching Snake, Naomi, and creepy monkey scene!

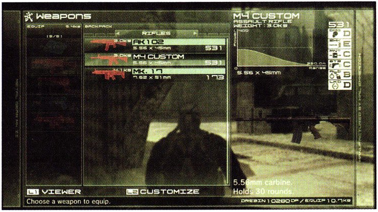
you've completed the single-player game for the first time). *MGS4* is still a stealth game, where going prone produces a threat ring around your body that generates spikes indicating the location of threatening forces. Numerous times throughout the game you'll have to go prone, using the Octocamo suit to adapt to the local color scheme, and wait while threats tell you that it was just their imagination and normal patrols are to be resumed. Jumping behind cover is simple enough, but you'll need to manipulate your visibility carefully to avoid being spotted. That, of course, is the heart of the *Metal Gear* legacy, and though you'll crouch and move to cover often enough, using the cardboard box or oil drum to hide is an option included primarily for fan devotees.

"THIS IS THE REAL WORLD, NOT SOME FANTASY GAME."

After the Middle East, you move to South America and uncover further plot details that start to tell the story of the Patriots, the shadow organization that sits at the heart of all *Metal Gear's* interweaving plotlines. Naturally, this includes some answers to a question indirectly posed by the game's title: Exactly what are the Guns of the Patriots? This exposition, which evolves throughout the entire 20 hours of gameplay (all tracked by stats you can view at the conclusion of each act), takes some time. While *MGS* veterans will be used to sitting back and watching the cutscenes, series newbies might be stunned at exactly how much time is spent watching. But here's a huge reason why *MGS4* is one of the most significant game designs of all time: If you come to the game with no prior *MGS* knowledge, you'll still uncover one of the most absorbing stories ever told in cutscene vignettes, produced as brilliantly as the medium has ever witnessed.

Take the time to drink in the information that floods through each character's dialogue. Only fleetingly does it seem overblown since the

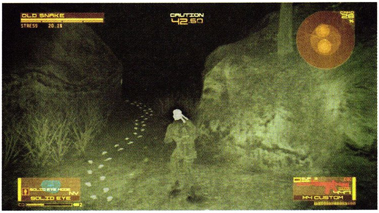
If you come to the game with no prior *MGS* knowledge, you'll still uncover one of the most absorbing stories ever told



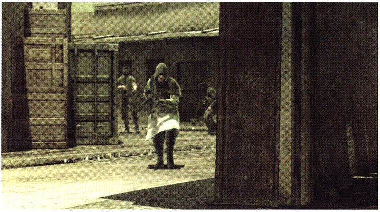
5.56mm carbine.
Holds 30 rounds.

Choose a weapon to equip.

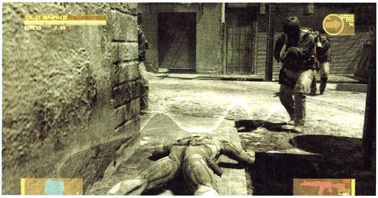
ID-tagged guns can't be used on the battlefield, a plot point that drives the mechanic of using Drebin, and also how Liquid manipulates the PMCs. When you get access, look for each weapon's strengths, including a graph indicating its power against its range.



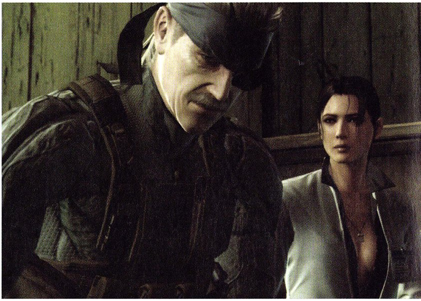
The Solid Eye has a night vision mode that lets you see important detail in the world, even during the daytime.



Only the gun (and the cigarette) give away that this is Snake sneaking through the Middle East, and not *Assassin's Creed's* Altair.



While the OctoCamo suit blends with the environment, alert guards will still spot you if they get this close. Since you can shoot from this position, take out their kneecaps, then hide again until the alert phase is over.



Old Snake appears to have Werner's Syndrome, but Naomi helps explain some of the background.

Drebin 893

The too-cool-for-school (or ID-tagging) gun launderer with his sidekick monkey provides style and a huge amount of substance through his understanding and exposition of the world backstory. His APC comes in handy in crucial action situations, his weapon and ammo store is vital in every late-game action scene, and his monkey with the Narc cola fixation provides awesome comic relief. Remember to look out for special weapon and ammo sales when the war economy dictates it's time to sell low.

direction and acting displayed in each cutscene is quite simply outstanding. Whether it's the subtle twitch of Meryl's lips (you'll know when), Snake's jerk back to modern-day awareness from a dream (already demonstrated in one of the released trailers), or the unbuttoned shirt distracting every early encounter with Naomi, every scene is compelling. Though it's true that on occasion you could be watching, not playing, for 30 minutes or more, a key gameplay device encourages you to remain focused on the job, hands on the controller. During cutscenes if you see an L1 appear in the top left corner, hit the button to see the scene from a slightly different camera angle. See an X in the top right corner and you can hit that button to reveal flashback scenes that pick images and moments from the earlier *Metal Gear* games for reference. Though this serves as terrific fan-service for series vets, it also rewards you with bonus points at the end of each act that are converted to Drebin points for you to spend at your newfound buddy's armory.

Drebin and his Narc-cola-swigging monkey sidekick prove critical to the plot as his weapon-dealing APC comes to the rescue in key situations. You'll even find yourself manning its turret gun to fend off tanks and Gekkos in a fast-paced thrill ride entirely devoid of stealth elements. Though ostensibly the core game remains stealth-based, the action quotient ramps up at times to spectacular levels, and *MGS4* shines in each of these situations.

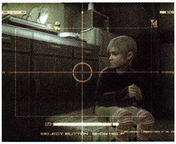
"IT'S NOT JUSTICE. IT'S A HIRED HIT."

Two acts into this experience you might think you know what's in store for the rest of the game, when it suddenly changes in such a beautiful way that you'll spend a few moments simply adjusting to the new environment. Heading into Eastern Europe, if you weren't sure before that this was a next-generation game, pushing the PS3's limits, then the architecture and gameplay moments packed into this act will have you so convinced that you'll be calling over friends, keeping save games for do-overs, and making sure everyone witnesses the staggering visuals.

While the spectacle of viewing each location is awe-inspiring, it's the sneak and the action scenes that you'll remember. (Handily, the trickiest sneak part of the game, in which you tail a resistance fighter from the shadows, is broken into digestible chunks.) Sure, you'll sit through some talky-talk cutscenes with Big Mama, but the character detail, animation, acting, and architecture ensures each minute remains memorable. Even sitting through cutscenes that showcase

手から見つかり難くなることが出来ます。スニーキングスーツを着ている時、ホフクや壁に張り付いた状

Two acts into this experience you might think you know what's in store for the rest of the game, when it suddenly changes in such a beautiful way



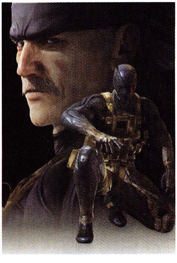
Metal Gear Online

As if the standalone game wasn't enough, the decision to include *Metal Gear Online* with this package underscores the terrific value packed onto the Blu-ray. We were finishing our final build of the game while the *Metal Gear Online* beta was still running. As such, we can't comment directly on the final experience, but the beta definitely gave strong pointers on what to expect.

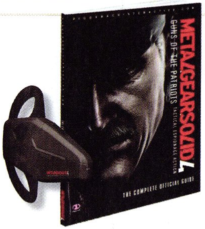
Interestingly, the update system to get the latest version uses a peer-to-peer transfer method (essentially a BitTorrent where the files are shared by each machine on the network). It definitely allowed for a fast download, but you can also download updates from the Konami website in a more traditional manner. You'll need to sign up for a Konami ID (different from your PlayStation Network ID). I recommend doing that on a computer instead of the PS3, as reading some of the fine print was tricky while trying to sign up through the game client.

Once in the system you get to choose your character's look from a large range of styles, and also set skills that cover all the disciplines you'll have encountered through the single-player (mastery of various weapon types, CQC, awareness, etc.). Jumping straight into a game can be a little disconcerting, and I suspect a fairly steep learning curve for those new to the game mechanics. It does pay to have played the single-player first, as the levels are based on areas that you'll already have traveled through, giving you a head start navigating through the maps.

We'll follow up with more details on how the play mechanics emerge when the servers are fully populated.



手から見つかり難くなることが出来ます。スニーキングスーツを着ている時、ホフクや壁に張り付いた状

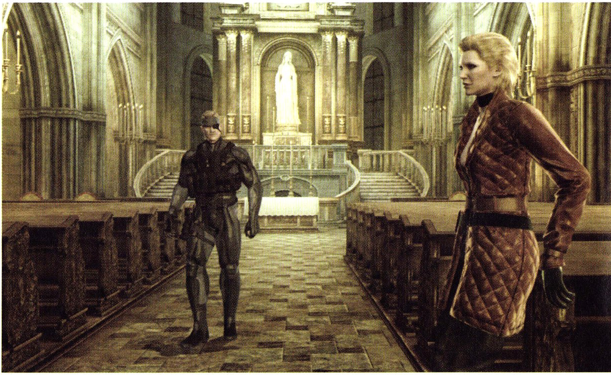


Collector's Corner

Alongside the regular shipping game is a Limited Edition version that's available exclusively at GameStop and retails for $84.99. That extra $25 buys you the cool packaging and a second Blu-ray disc featuring extensive making-of videos and interviews with the game's director, Hideo Kojima. Also included is the game's soundtrack CD, and that's got to be worth $10 of anyone's money—so the $15 for the extras, while a little steep, shouldn't put off the legion of *Metal Gear* fans.

Even the strategy guide comes in a Collector's Edition. For the extra dough you get a hard cover book with a lithograph and, we hope, some extra clues, though the basic guide is promised to be very complete.

Also confirmed for release on the day the game ships is a wireless *Metal Gear* headset. Retailing for $60, this Bluetooth 2.0 device has a Metal Gear Mk. II look to its design, has the game logo stamped on the side, and can also be used with other Bluetooth-enabled devices. For the discerning *MGO* player!



With Big Mama in Eastern Europe, this cathedral is a spectacular work of art. From the textures on the statues to the brushed stone to the leather-bound books on the wall (not to mention the characters themselves) this is probably the greatest showcase for next-generation visuals we've seen so far on PS3.

apparent blueprints of orbiting satellites (it looks like a college lecture, but the presentation is impressive enough to be continually compelling) is rewarding because it creates an understanding of what has happened in the world, why, and who's behind it all (ultimately, Liquid, which reaffirms for the newbie the relatively simple nature of an *MGS* story—there's one bad guy to follow).

Whether it's crawling on your stomach, watching the alert ring for signs of danger, crawl-running behind cover, or hanging from ledges and inching through danger, the level of interaction with the game world is spectacular. An incredible depth of gun customization options—the ability to add sights, lights, and better grips for improved accuracy—further enhances the myriad ways of taking a different approach to the world. (Each gun is rated from A to E for its damage, shock, and puncture abilities, as well as its stability, reload time, and lock-on. I wish some of this data was available before you buy or scavenge a weapon, but if you take the time to research and pore through the options, it can pay off on the battlefield.)

Of course, Snake's trademark items like the cardboard box return, letting you hide out of sight while patrols pass by. And if you need a little relaxation, want to bring down the stress level, then plug in your iPod and listen to any of the *Metal Gear* music (including songs from previous games in the series that you can scavenge from various levels). Yes, that's a real iPod, not a knock-off, and it controls as an iPod would. (Be sure to listen to Associate Producer Ryan Payton's exclusive in-game podcast.)

Keeping the Solid Eye device equipped is crucial most of the game. It helps you spot items in the world, as well as provides health or damage data on what you're targeting. This can mean the difference between life and reload when fighting Gekko since it's not always apparent if you're doing damage to their big metal noggins. Be sure to take the Metal Gear Mk. II for a spin around Otacon's Nomad during any of the cutscenes to find an extra battery (and other items, such as extra ammo) that provides the Solid Eye with extra juice.

"I'M NOT DEAD YET."

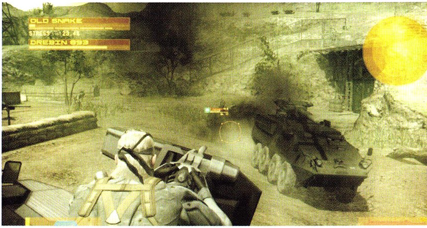
The fan-service moments will undoubtedly get series veterans cooing with delight, and the return to Shadow Moses Island illustrates that perfectly. But again, you don't need to have played the original game to appreciate the detailed attention to *Metal Gear* lore. The snow-blown outdoor environment once again changes the game dynamic, and as snowflakes drift onto the "camera," you'll be forgiven for wondering if you've stumbled out of a game and into a full-blown steadicam-filmed movie.

The level of detail will have you shaking your head in disbelief at times. Whether it's the knit of Otacon's sweater or the way the new Metal Gear Mk. III slips on the ice as it moves to open a door, it's clear that no expense has been

Liquid Ocelot

The main enemy. For the *Metal Gear* novice, all you need to know is that he's the guy you're tracking down. Of course, his history with Snake, relationship with the Patriot organization, even his heritage gets a full and fitting exposition throughout the game. By the end you'll understand his plans, motivations, position in the organization, and exactly how he matches up against Snake in classic Close-Quarters-Combat.

> ***MGS4*** **is special in so many ways that I suspect it will reside among the videogame industry's greatest achievements long after we're dust**



It's not all sneaking in the shadows as this scene atop Drebin's APC illustrates. Note Snake's health bar—hitting L2 brings up the item menu (pausing the action) and lets you scroll around to your stash of rations or noodles to instantly and seamlessly replenish your health.

spared to ensure that every scene is polished to a level you just don't see in "normal" games. At Shadow Moses, fans will love the reference to earlier visits, but if that means nothing to you, you're not really missing out on anything other than an appreciation of this world's history. What you won't miss out on is fresh action moments that can easily get Snake screaming in a "combat high." Arm yourself with a weapon that holds 100 or 200 rounds in a magazine, and when the opportunity presents itself, get trigger happy.

We're not going to spoil some of the more spectacular moments, but suffice to say that the ramp up to the game's conclusion is filled with so many talking points it defies belief. Even if you had never met any of the characters in previous games, by the end you'll know exactly who to pull for, and then just admire the sensational voice acting and animation that brings so many vital scenes to life. Some of the challenges along the way will test your skills and your retention of the details divulged in the cutscenes (concluding the battle with Vamp being one great example). If you fail a battle a couple of times, consider changing out your arsenal (or calling up Otacon on the Codec for mid-mission advice). What are the enemies using against you? Maybe that gun would be more effective.

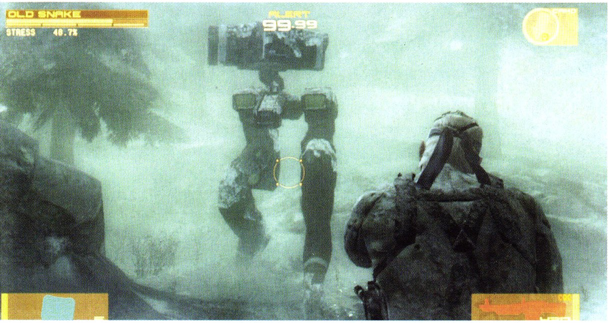
"YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE A DEATH WISH TO GO IN THERE."

Chasing down Liquid and thwarting his plans to launch a nuclear warhead from an orbiting satellite becomes the late-game focus, but wrapping up the storylines of these spectacularly defined characters is equally as compelling. At the end, as you sit and watch nearly an hour of epilogue conclusion, it's clear that you don't need to be a *Metal Gear* head to appreciate either the story, the gameplay action, or the evident commitment to quality that's gone into presenting each scene with such care, precision, and skill.

MGS4 is special in so many ways that I suspect it will reside among the videogame industry's greatest achievements long after we're dust and our interactive entertainment is supplied via holographic form—wirelessly, of course—direct to that chip lodged in our noggins. It truly is difficult to find fault. I was too hooked into the storyline to consider the occasionally lengthy cutscenes as a distraction from the real game. While linear in its progression, the variety of methods in each level of getting to where you're going provides plenty of reason to go back for multiple playthroughs. I've finished it twice now, and I highly suspect more playthroughs lie in my future. That, right there, is the hallmark of a game deserving instant recognition on any all-time top 10 list.

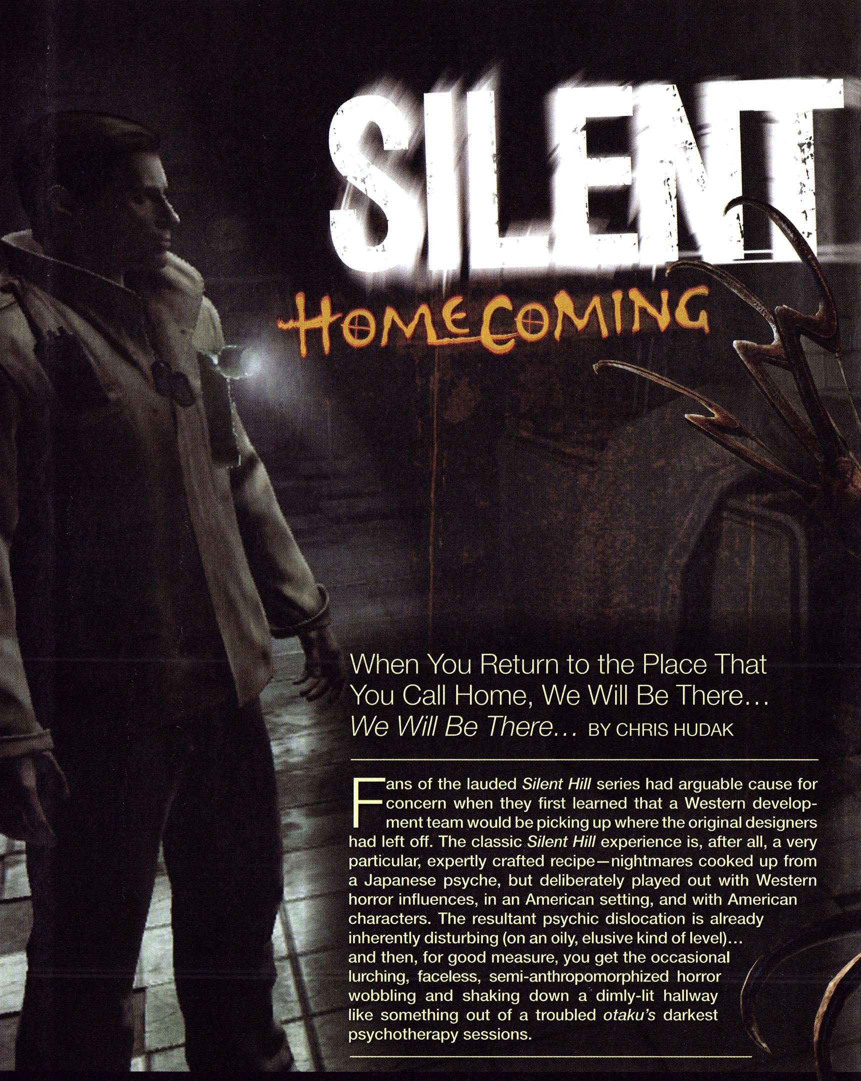
★★★★★

Target the Gekko's legs to bring it down, and then its neck to cause it to explode. Equip the Solid Eye to help provide feedback on your target and the damage you're inflicting (the rail gun is particularly effective).



Raiden

You can't keep a good badass ninja down, however hard Liquid Ocelot and his forces might try. Satisfying all fans of the series, Raiden/Jack's role wraps up, and is explained to a very amicable outcome. Some of the earliest *MGS4* trailers showcased Raiden fighting Gekkos, as well as Vamp, and the final version of those scenes bring a balletic beauty to their killer-instinct backdrop.



SILENT HOMECOMING

When You Return to the Place That You Call Home, We Will Be There… *We Will Be There…*

BY CHRIS HUDAK

Fans of the lauded *Silent Hill* series had arguable cause for concern when they first learned that a Western development team would be picking up where the original designers had left off. The classic *Silent Hill* experience is, after all, a very particular, expertly crafted recipe—nightmares cooked up from a Japanese psyche, but deliberately played out with Western horror influences, in an American setting, and with American characters. The resultant psychic dislocation is already inherently disturbing (on an oily, elusive kind of level)… and then, for good measure, you get the occasional lurching, faceless, semi-anthropomorphized horror wobbling and shaking down a dimly-lit hallway like something out of a troubled *otaku's* darkest psychotherapy sessions.

HILL

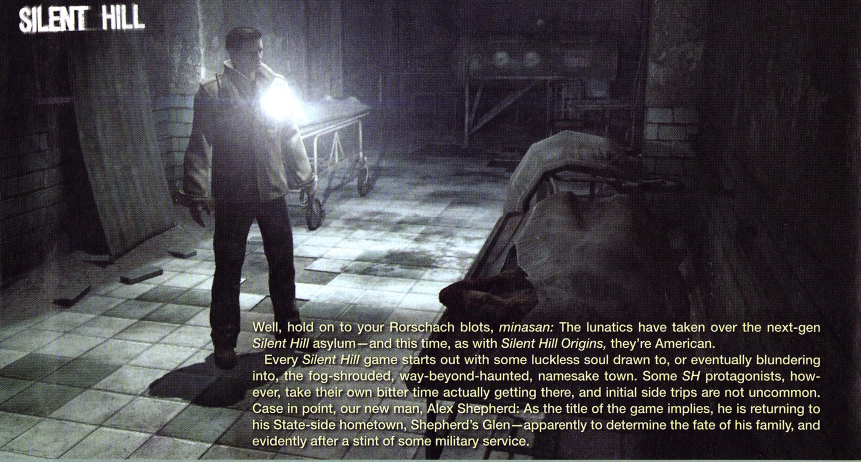
Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE:
September

GENRE:
Horror

PUBLISHER:
Konami

DEVELOPER:
Double Helix



Well, hold on to your Rorschach blots, *minasan:* The lunatics have taken over the next-gen *Silent Hill* asylum—and this time, as with *Silent Hill Origins,* they're American.

Every *Silent Hill* game starts out with some luckless soul drawn to, or eventually blundering into, the fog-shrouded, way-beyond-haunted, namesake town. Some *SH* protagonists, however, take their own bitter time actually getting there, and initial side trips are not uncommon. Case in point, our new man, Alex Shepherd: As the title of the game implies, he is returning to his State-side hometown, Shepherd's Glen—apparently to determine the fate of his family, and evidently after a stint of some military service.

If you bump into an object such as a gurney, it will move and make noise, and that's cool. If it moves and makes noise by *itself,* however...

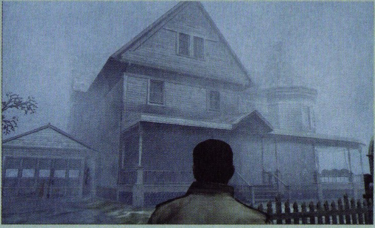
HOMEWARD. BOUND.

First off: Execution is everything. With a new *Silent Hill* dev team comes questions: "Are they going to nail it? Will it still be creepy? What if we just get a *Resident Evil 5* with a good soundtrack? Wouldn't that suck?" Even if a new *Silent Hill* game promises flawless visuals and awesome mechanics, it doesn't mean much if the presentation and tone aren't just right.

Thankfully, any initial free-floating doubts we might have had were put to rest by the game's introductory sequence: A cinematic from the point of view of someone strapped onto a gurney, being double-time trundled down a nightmarish, dilapidated hospital corridor. The gurney bangs through sets of swinging doors, each new corridor-segment revealing terrible glimpses of fresh horrors in the rooms passing by on either side; a shrieking, flailing patient being brutally operated on here, an oily (headless?) carcass being unceremoniously dumped into some kind of corpse-disposal pit there—and dead ahead, the limbed shadow-play of something ghastly happening just beyond the frosted panes of the next set of doors. Yikes.

Silent Hill has never tried hiding its cinematic influences, and the intro is yet another blatant tip-of-the-severed-head to *Jacob's Ladder* (with a rather over-the-top dash of *Hostel).* All of this, with the full state-of-the-art visual *ick* that the PlayStation 3 can cram into your eye sockets. Yeah, it's pretty nasty.

And yet for an anxious, protective, long-time fan of the series, this messed-up cinematic sequence is, indeed, a little like coming home… provided, of course, that your home was Clive Barker's Home for the Cataclysmically Damaged.



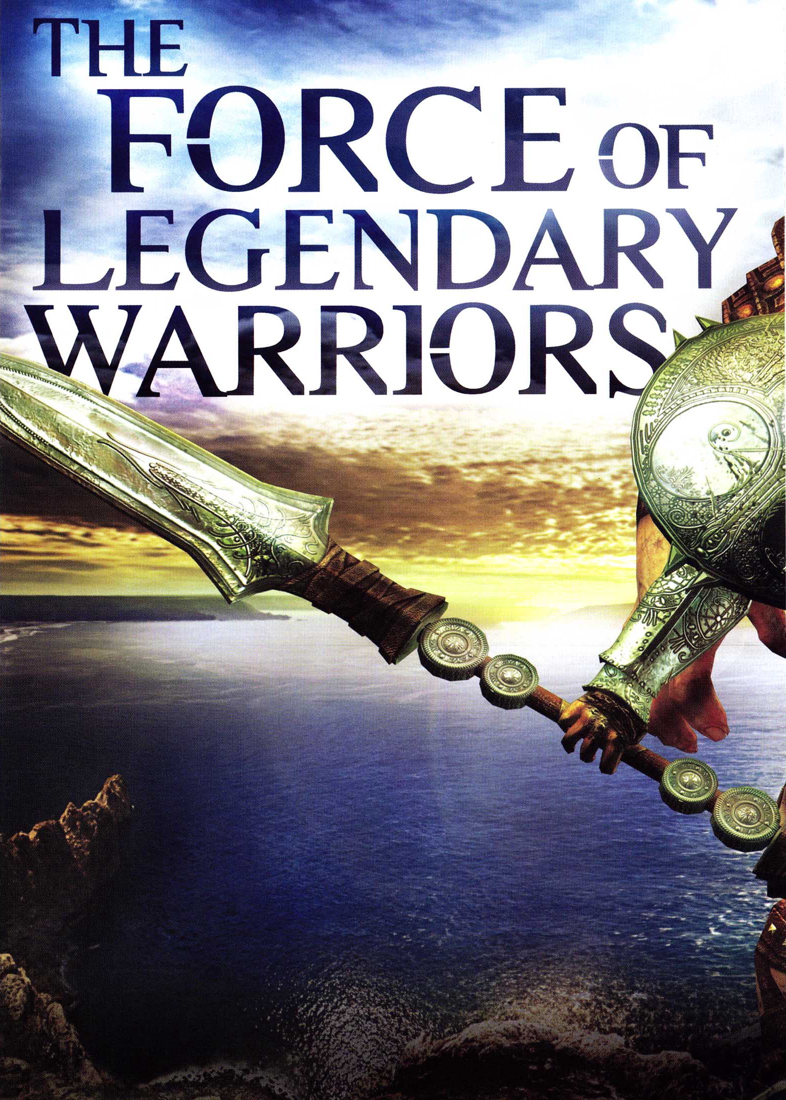
Back to your silent, desolate childhood home (this should end well). Still, it could be worse...

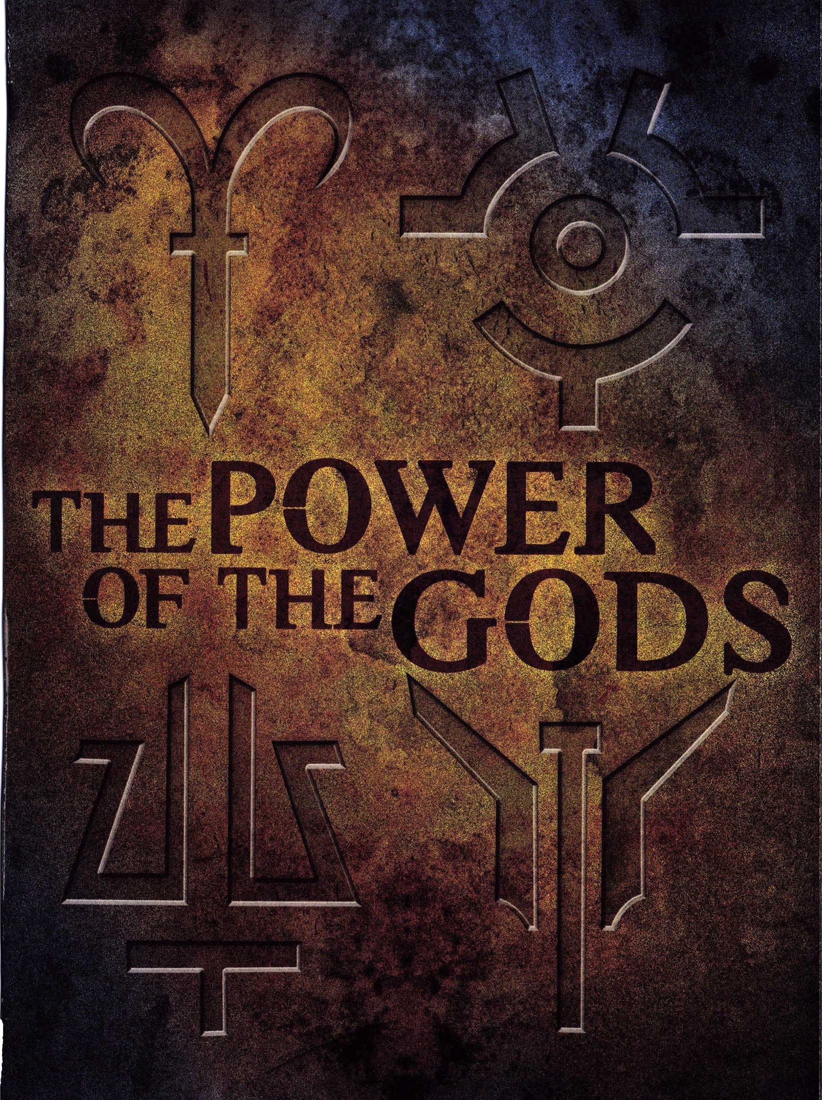
WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

Shepherd has returned to his boyhood town for the idyllic comforts of home and family, but his homecoming is a rude one: The streets of Shepherd's Glen foggy and desolate, the house of his childhood cold and changed, his mother damn-near catatonic, his younger brother apparently missing, and the streets full of monsters (and that's before he gets to Silent Hill proper).

Homecoming, though fifth in the series—sixth, if you count *Origins*—is also a game of firsts. For starters, it's the first game of the series on the PlayStation 3 (not to mention the first to support DualShock 3—because assaulting your eyes, ears, and dreams just wasn't quite enough), and the presentational improvements are impressive. As Shepherd makes his way through the bleak normal world—not to mention the hellish alternate-world

THE FORCE OF LEGENDARY WARRIORS





THE POWER OF THE GODS

THE COU
RISE O
ARG
ROLE PLAYIN
COMING F
riseoftihearg
codemasters
PlayStation
PLAYSTATION 3
XBOX 360 LIVE
Ga

© 2007 The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). All rights reserved. "Codemasters"® is a registered trademark owned
"Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. All other copyrights or trademarks are the propert

URAGE
TO BE A
OF THE
NAUTS™
G REDEFINED
ALL 2008
jonauts.net
ames for Windows
POWERED BY
gamespy®
LiQUiD
ENTERTAINMENT®
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

by Codemasters. "Argonauts"™, "The Rise of the Argonauts"™ and the Codemasters logo are trademarks of Codemasters. **GameSpy and the**
y of their respective owners and are being used under license. Developed by Liquid Entertainment Inc. and published by Codemasters.

HERO

OVERLORD
RAISING HELL

THINK EVIL, BREED EVIL, CONTROL ALL

DOWNLOAD THE DEMO NOW FROM PLAYSTATION® Network

The Overlord is back! The anarchic Action RPG title arrives with a devilish array of new content included. Containing the original hit title Overlord™ and complete with "Raising Hell" expansion and additional features exclusive to the PLAYSTATION®3 computer entertainment system

Manage your minions and wreak havoc

Explore and conquer 5 new realms

7 extra multiplayer maps including competitive & co-operative missions

PLAYSTATION 3
OVERLORD
RAISING HELL
TRIUMPH STUDIOS
codemasters

OUT JUNE 2008

WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/OVERLORDRAISINGHELL

TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Crude Humor
Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol
Violence

PLAYSTATION®3 4J STUDIOS TRIUMPH STUDIOS codemasters™

© 2005-2008 Triumph Studios B.V. ("Triumph"). All rights reserved. "Codemasters"® is a registered trademark owned by The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). The Codemasters logo and "Overlord"™ are trade marks of Codemasters. All other copyrights or trademarks are the property of their respective owners and are being used under license. Original game developed by Triumph. Converted by 4J Studios Limited and published by Codemasters. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

...It's worse.

that inevitably comes after that harbinger-of-doom siren—he can interact with his environment on new levels, bumping into moveable objects that have their own physics and resultant sounds.

The game rewards or punishes your strategic use of environmental cover-noise. Bump into a hospital gurney or office chair as you're walking (or running), and it will roll away on its casters, clattering in the dark until you start wondering: Did I make that sound? You are, to quote the dev guys, "the bull in the china shop"—an intrusive presence in an unfriendly, unholy, unlit world full of things ready to zero in on your aural clumsiness and waste you.

If your home-gaming area is set up for it, the 7.1 audio scheme will allow you to get surround sound cues from the left, right, or even behind you, as you blunder through some godforsaken hospital full of echoing footsteps, suspicious metallic crashes, and that old standby: The cries of unseen, wailing children in the shadows. Oh, *goody.*

And speaking of shadows, it's all bad news here for you especially paranoid types, even if you do turn on your flashlight. The relentless real-time lighting can send complex, moving shadows lunging up every blighted wall and suddenly lurching across any intervening table, desk or other piece of furniture

A familiar trucker, who survived the last *Silent Hill* game, looks a little worse for wear—and he got the good ending.

"HOME IS ANY FOUR WALLS THAT ENCLOSE THE RIGHT PERSON"

The Unpredictable Evolution of a Series' Fighting Protagonists

In the first *Silent Hill,* Harry Mason was a generic, medium-build doofus—a caring father, to be sure, but neither particularly tough nor distinctive.

James Sunderland was considerably bigger and more physical in *Silent Hill 2,* but nearly as behaviorally nondescript as his predecessor.

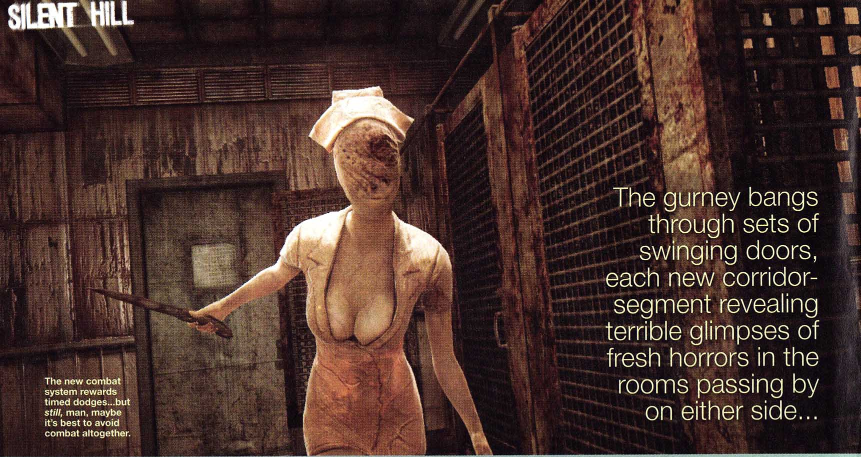
Silent Hill 3's Heather Mason was only a shortish teenager, but she was a scrappy little thing who could handle a switchblade and mouth off to adults.

Henry Townshend was, well, kind of a wimp—*SH 4's* emo-introvert—but he always meant well, even though he couldn't fight for sour owl poop.

Travis Grady of *SH Origins* was an unshaven trucker/tough guy who'd bash a monstrosity's head in with a TV set if a sledgehammer wasn't available.

From what we've seen of *SH Homecoming,* Alex Shepherd clearly is or was a soldier, and can probably take on the lot and hand them their buttocks.

...no matter what wrong, god-awful abomination you end up fighting; it's unlikely you'll feel short-changed...



The gurney bangs through sets of swinging doors, each new corridor-segment revealing terrible glimpses of fresh horrors in the rooms passing by on either side...

The new combat system rewards timed dodges...but *still,* man, maybe it's best to avoid combat altogether.

A branching-conversation scheme makes its debut in *Homecoming.* Still feel like talking to strangers?

as you move about the room, obscuring, jostling or knocking over light sources (yeah, if some dark patch on the wall starts moving and it isn't shaped like you, your best bet is probably to start shooting…or start running).

Bonus bad news: If your jacket-mounted flashlight lets you see it, then it can see you.

HOME IS WHERE THE HURT IS

Another welcome innovation is the cohesive combination of the new camera and combat systems. Gone are the static-but-dramatic camera angles of the early *Silent Hill* games, in favor of a much more dynamic, free-flowing, follow-cam view. Combat—never the traditional strong point of *Silent Hill* games—is considerably manned-up here, with a variety of context-sensitive swings, dodges, and even finishing moves (for each weapon and for each monster).

Any way you (so sorry!) slice it; combat has evolved from the earlier games. For example, some monsters are "blockers," and deliberately prevent you from running away, as common sense would tell you to do (just like so many cowardly-but-wise *Silent Hill 2* players, who never saw a moment of combat out in the streets, where there was room to avoid almost everything). Others are just flat out faster than you are, and there are some nasty flying bug/rat/mosquito swarm-bug things that attach to Shepherd's body and drain his health. If you time your reaction to one of these things just right, you can grab them, fling them down to the ground, and destroy them before they mess you up too badly. At least some creatures will display a visual "tell" the instant before they launch into a strong attack, giving savvy players a chance to work them over.

One other note on combat: In contrast to previous *Silent Hill* protags, Alex Shepherd is very clearly a soldier and a badass—a man trained to fight—and some of his finishing moves are so effective and brutal that it makes you wonder all the more about his past (and the designers damn well know it, too). Further, your enemies will show dynamic cuts when Shepherd slashes them with a knife, their gash-wounds steadily accumulating in targeted areas until at least one of you is dead. One thing is for sure, no matter what wrong, god-awful abomination you end up fighting; it's unlikely you'll feel short-changed on the visceral-combat front once you gain the upper hand and start kicking its butt.

Other assorted tweaks and improvements abound: A contextual hop-over mechanic for low walls and obstructions; helpful objective screens that keep you on track in the overall story; a gate mechanic that requires Alex to literally saw open doors—apparently made of flesh—with a knife before squeezing through them, leaving jagged door-sized wounds lined with teeth (by the way, many monsters will pursue you when you run through doors now, so you can't rely on that tactic anymore); sensible, assigned shortcuts for commonly-used items; the requirement to actually, deliberately use items to solve puzzles (this prevents you from simply fumbling your way through the game by the happenstance of item-possession); cycling stages of night and day; contextual melee-grappling in combat; select armored points on certain enemies; multiple-choice dialogue trees; and of course, the phenomenal audio work of Evil Sound Wizard Yamaoka Akira, the "voice of *Silent Hill*" himself, who has contributed an estimated hour of original music (not to mention untold samples of deeply unpleasant ambient audio).

Robert Frost said that "Home is the place where, if you have to go there, they have to take you in." It's looking to be a homecoming of sorts this September, when survival-horror fans return to Silent Hill—where, if you have to go there, They might have to take you *out.* ■

HANDS·ON MOBILE™

ADVERTORIAL

INSIDE

IRON MAN VS HULK
Two games with classic arcade action, both with Marvel's official seal of approval

DELVING DEEPER
Mobile gaming is getting more community-based. Hands-On Mobile has all the details

GUITAR HERO III MOBILE
We look at one of the most exciting and critically acclaimed mobile games today

GUITAR HERO III MOBILE

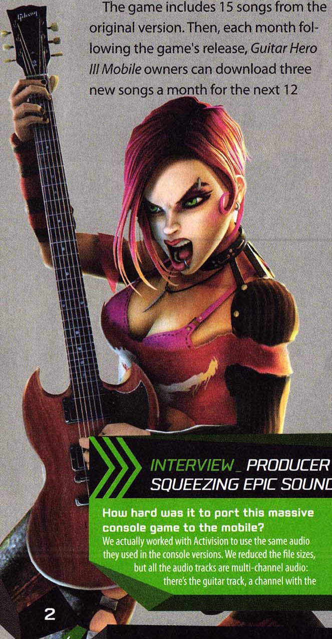
The blockbuster music game is live and mobile. Rock on!

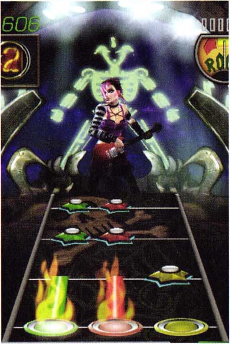
Find yourself a quiet room or a headset, because you'll want to turn up the volume! *Guitar Hero III Mobile* is a port of the massive-selling rock game, and amazingly, it rocks just as much as the full-on console versions.

The game includes 15 songs from the original version. Then, each month following the game's release, *Guitar Hero III Mobile* owners can download three new songs a month for the next 12 months free, which means a year after its release, there will be a full 51 songs that players can access. The game also features two characters (Axel Steel and Judy Nails), three venues and four guitars in a pocket-sized package.

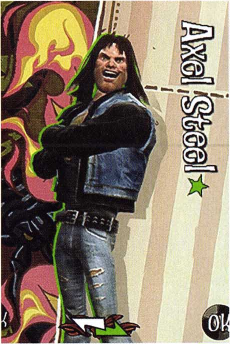
To keep the game's file size down, your phone has two songs loaded at any given time. Accessing a different one downloads it. On the Verizon network, one song took less than 40 seconds to download.

Compared to its full-sized versions, *Guitar Hero III Mobile* involves simplified controls (there are three "notes" instead of the regular five). But after playing it, we're happy that there are only three — it's plenty challenging. At expert difficulty, riffing along to "Cherub Rock" or "Black Magic Woman" is a true accomplishment—one that you can track on online leaderboards and unlockable Accomplishment lists. The game is so full-fledged you'll want to bring a fast phone, 'cause you don't want to miss a single note on this one.





Songs like Wolfmother's "Woman" can really test your fret work at expert difficulty.



Just like in the console versions, you'll have character and guitar selections to make.

INTERVIEW_ PRODUCER JJ LECHLEITER ON SQUEEZING EPIC SOUND INTO YOUR MOBILE

How hard was it to port this massive console game to the mobile?
We actually worked with Activision to use the same audio they used in the console versions. We reduced the file sizes, but all the audio tracks are multi-channel audio: there's the guitar track, a channel with the background instruments and vocals, another channel playing the "boos," the missed note sound... so that was really incredible to work with such complicated audio for a mobile game. It was definitely one of our challenges.

Why reduce the controls to 3 buttons?
That was something we discussed at great length—when you try doing this with five buttons on the mobile, it's tough to map out in your brain. We did some tests with that, and it's just more fun by having those three rows; rapid transitions and simultaneous presses give you that added difficulty. We want people to actually feel like they're playing it on the phone.

LAUNDROMAT

CAFE

ROCK THE BUS STOP

CAB

LIBRARY

PLAY IT NOW TEXT SET TO 46966

STARTING AT JUST $2.99*

HANDS·ON MOBILE

ACTIVISION.

Gibson

Sprint

GUITAR HERO III MOBILE

ROCK ON THE GO

© 2007 ACTIVISION PUBLISHING, INC. ACTIVISION AND GUITAR HERO ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF ACTIVISION PUBLISHING, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COVERED BY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PATENTS: U.S. PATENT NOS. 5,739,457, 6,018,121, 6,369,313 AND 6,835,887. ALL GIBSON MARKS, LOGOS, TRADE DRESS, GUITAR MODELS, CONTROLLER SHAPES AND RELATED RIGHTS PROVIDED PURSUANT TO EXCLUSIVE LICENSE FROM GIBSON GUITAR CORP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. MOBILE GAME CODE © 2007 HANDS-ON MOBILE, INC. HANDS-ON MOBILE IS A TRADEMARK OF HANDS-ON MOBILE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. STANDARD MESSAGE RATES APPLY. *PRICING VARIES BY CARRIER AND GAME PURCHASE TYPE.

GUITARHEROMOBILE.COM

IRON MAN

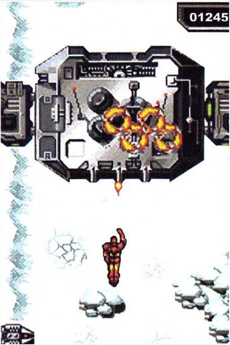
Who needs Wheaties—you've got a metal armor suit!

If the movie *Iron Man* got you thinking about how cool it would be slap on your own high-tech suit of armor and unleash a super-sized can of metal-fortified whup-ass on the forces of evil, then now's your chance.

The action in this non-stop shooter takes place in the air, and it's presented via a slick top-down perspective that compliments *The Incredible Hulk's* street-brawling urban setting. You don Iron Man's Mark III armor and take to the skies to defend the world and retrieve stolen Stark technology, taking on wave after wave of enemy ships, tanks, planes, robots, and more, in four explosive levels.

The action is fast, furious, and non-stop—just as it should be in an arcade-style shooter. And you have to watch your health meter closely, grab power ups for your armor whenever possible and make tactical, judicious, use of your Unibeam to take out the massive end-of-level bosses. Ultimately you're up against Iron Monger himself!

Marvel fans will appreciate the insight the story provides into the film's narrative and *Iron Man* the game does a superb job of letting you "live the fantasy."



Iron Man flies around like a classic arcade shooter, and just as fast and furious.

CARRIERS: ALL MAJOR
CODE: "MAN" TO 46966

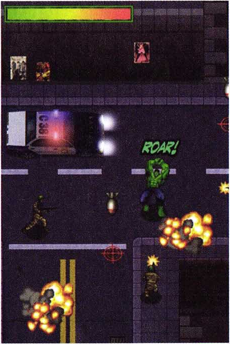
THE INCREDIBLE HULK

A smashing good time

Me like smash things in games. Me good at smash. Me… ah, sorry. After playing *The Incredible Hulk* for a few hours we have to say that we went a bit… overboard in getting into character. (No matter how hard we tried, though, we couldn't flex enough to rip our shirts apart).

As Hulk, you confront an all-new adversary known as The Abomination, who has it out for Bruce Banner's poor misunderstood alter-ego. Hulk battles his new nemesis, and his army of minions, through three large levels ripped from the upcoming film. Hulk can pick up just about everything he sees—police cars, dumpsters, phone booths, and even enemy soldiers—and hurl them at his tormentors. He can also smash through walls, climb walls, and jump between buildings to advance each level.

Hulk moves with a catlike grace that belies his massive frame, thanks to fluid animation and smooth frame rates that hold up even when the pyrotechnics are at their crescendo. The Big Green Guy's brute power and thirst for destruction are the stars of the show here, and the game serves up both in style.



The more creative the destruction he wreaks, the more style points Hulk gets.

CARRIERS: ALL MAJOR
CODE: "HULK" TO 46966

BREAK ROOM
CUBICLE
DOMINATE THE CAFE
CAFETERIA
STUDY HALL
KRUSH

PLAY IT NOW TEXT IRON TO 46966

STARTING AT JUST $2.99*

HANDS·ON MOBILE

MARVEL MOBILE

IRON MAN

HERO ON THE GO

MARVELMOBILE.COM

IRON MAN, THE MOVIE © 2008 MVL FILM FINANCE LLC. MARVEL, IRON MAN, ALL CHARACTER NAMES AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES: TM & © 2008 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. TM & © 2008 HANDS-ON MOBILE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. STANDARD MESSAGE RATES APPLY. *PRICING VARIES BY CARRIER AND GAME PURCHASE TYPE.

MORE THAN MOBILE GAMES

Delving deeper into the mobile community: The games that get it!

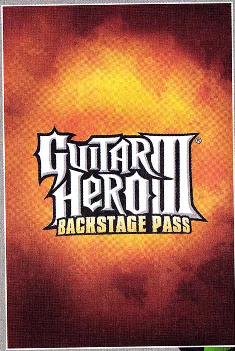
Most mobile games deliver a gameplay experience that's meant to be enjoyed alone. The vast majority of games are missing a sense of community—a connection to like-minded players and the ability to add new features or even go online to enjoy them on our PCs.

Hands-On Mobile is working hard to change this. The company is unleashing the mobile platform's greatest resource—its connectivity—to bring a very deep community aspect to its latest titles, such as *World Poker Tour Texas Hold 'Em 2,* and future titles such as the highly anticipated *Guitar Hero III: Backstage Pass*, which is due out this summer.

Each of these titles is unparalleled in the mobile space for the range of web-to-wireless enhancements they offer. In *WPT Texas Hold 'Em 2* you can take your user name and the bankroll you've earned playing on your mobile online to wptmobile.net and play with other people on their phones or on their computers—at the same table! Customizable avatars, the ability to set up public or private tables, and IM-style chat features (including buddy lists) combine to make *WPT Texas Hold 'Em 2* much more than a mobile game—it's a *community*.

As a result, *WPT Texas Hold 'Em 2* is enjoying a rabid, and exploding, fan base. "People are looking to the game to continue relationships, such as a weekly poker night they had in college with a group of friends after they've all graduated and dispersed around the country—or the world," says Senior Product Manager Stephanie Morgan.

Meanwhile, *Guitar Hero III: Backstage Pass* is bringing the type of gameplay experience to mobile that has traditionally been reserved for the console and PC platforms. *Backstage Pass* will serve up 25 hours of standalone play and then make that almost limitless with a full-featured web companion that will let players design their own competitions with virtual cash on the line, create custom avatars, and purchase new guitars and songs for use in the game.



Guitar Hero III: Backstage Pass *lets you create custom avatars online.*

"This is the most robust web-to-mobile functionality ever seen in a mobile game," says Senior Product Manager JJ Lechleiter. "New songs, guitars, and avatars mean an ever-changing experience that is going to keep gamers coming back for more."

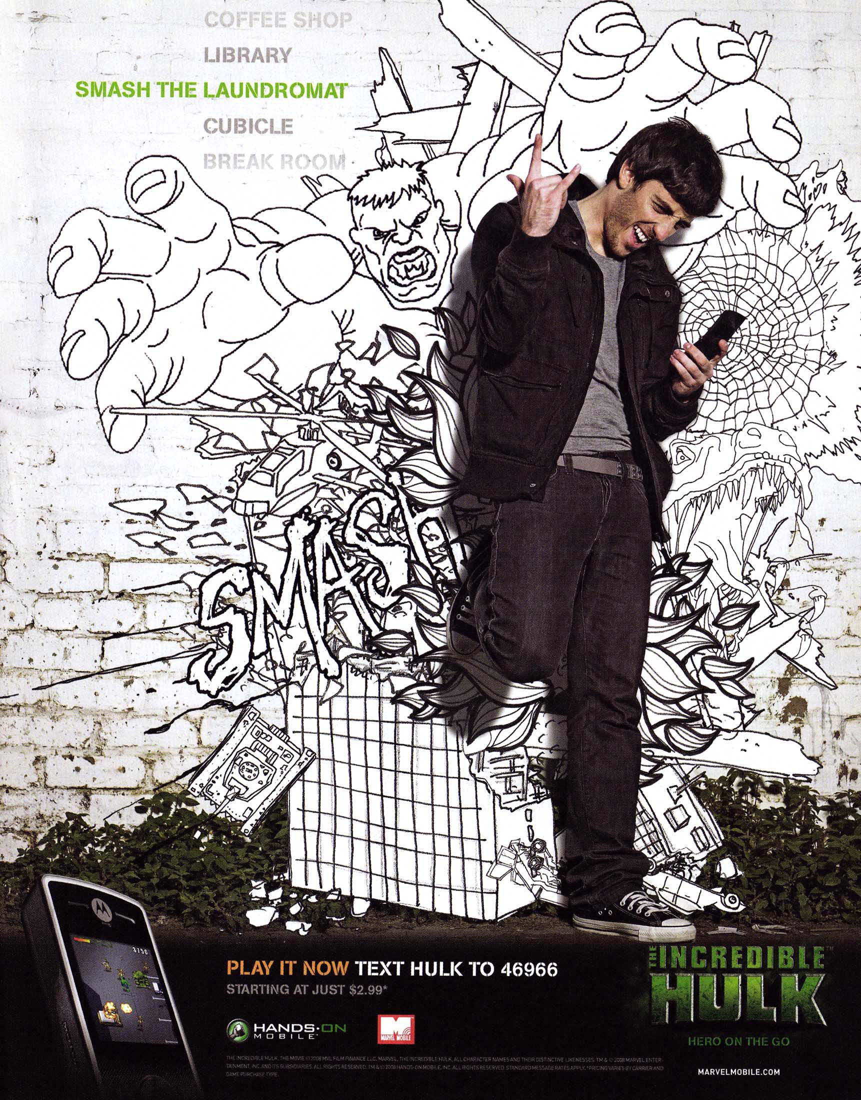
GET WPT TEXAS HOLD 'EM 2 BY TEXTING WPT TO 46966

IRENE
$650
HADI
$650
80
80
WPT

THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF POKER GOIN' ON!

As these stats attest, Hands-On is clearly on the right track with its new community focus. Since *WPT Texas Hold 'Em 2's* November 2007 launch:

- ▲More than 19 million hands have been played.
- ▲More than 12 million chat messages have been sent
- ▲More than 180,000 people are engaging in multiplayer sessions
- ▲Longest play session to date: 30 hours!



COFFEE SHOP

LIBRARY

SMASH THE LAUNDROMAT

CUBICLE

BREAK ROOM

PLAY IT NOW TEXT HULK TO 46966

STARTING AT JUST $2.99*

HANDS·ON MOBILE

MARVEL MOBILE

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

HERO ON THE GO

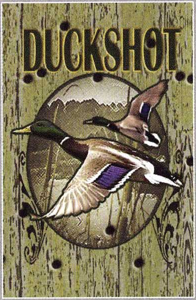
THE INCREDIBLE HULK, THE MOVIE © 2008 MVL FILM FINANCE LLC. MARVEL, THE INCREDIBLE HULK, ALL CHARACTER NAMES AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES: TM & © 2008 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. AND IT'S SUBSIDIARIES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. TM & © 2008 HANDS-ON MOBILE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. STANDARD MESSAGE RATES APPLY. *PRICING VARIES BY CARRIER AND GAME PURCHASE TYPE.

MARVELMOBILE.COM

Put these on your mobile today !

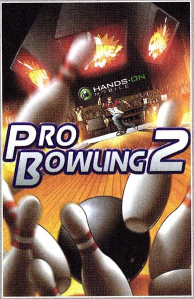
HOT TITLES

DUCKSHOT KEYWORD: DUCK



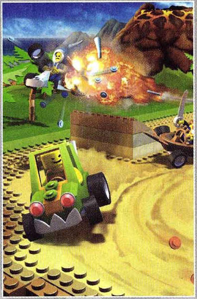
Can't get to the field for some hunting action—or it's out of season? No problem: fire up *Duckshot*—the only mobile waterfowl hunting game. Stalk geese, mallards, pintails, and the elusive Golden Snipe with a virtual shotgun in an array of beautiful settings—and tackle an assortment of engaging puzzles, too.

PRO BOWLING 2 KEYWORD: BOWL2



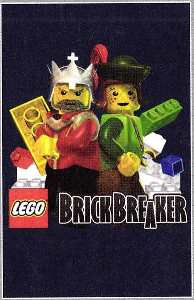
Climb your way to the top of the professional bowling circuit in this sequel to the most fun and addictive bowling game of all time. Choose from 18 playable characters and several different play modes, including single and multiplayer matches. New animations and realistic graphics bring the pin-knocking action to life!

LEGO RACERS KEYWORD: RACERS



Pick your favorite racer based on five classic LEGO themes—Pirate, Dinosaur, Space, Construction, and Arctic—and race your way through 15 tracks and five types of terrain. Grab power-ups, customize your racer between races, trip up your opponents with banana peels and missiles, avoid obstacles, and grab the checkered flag!

LEGO BRICK BREAKER KEYWORD: LEGOBB

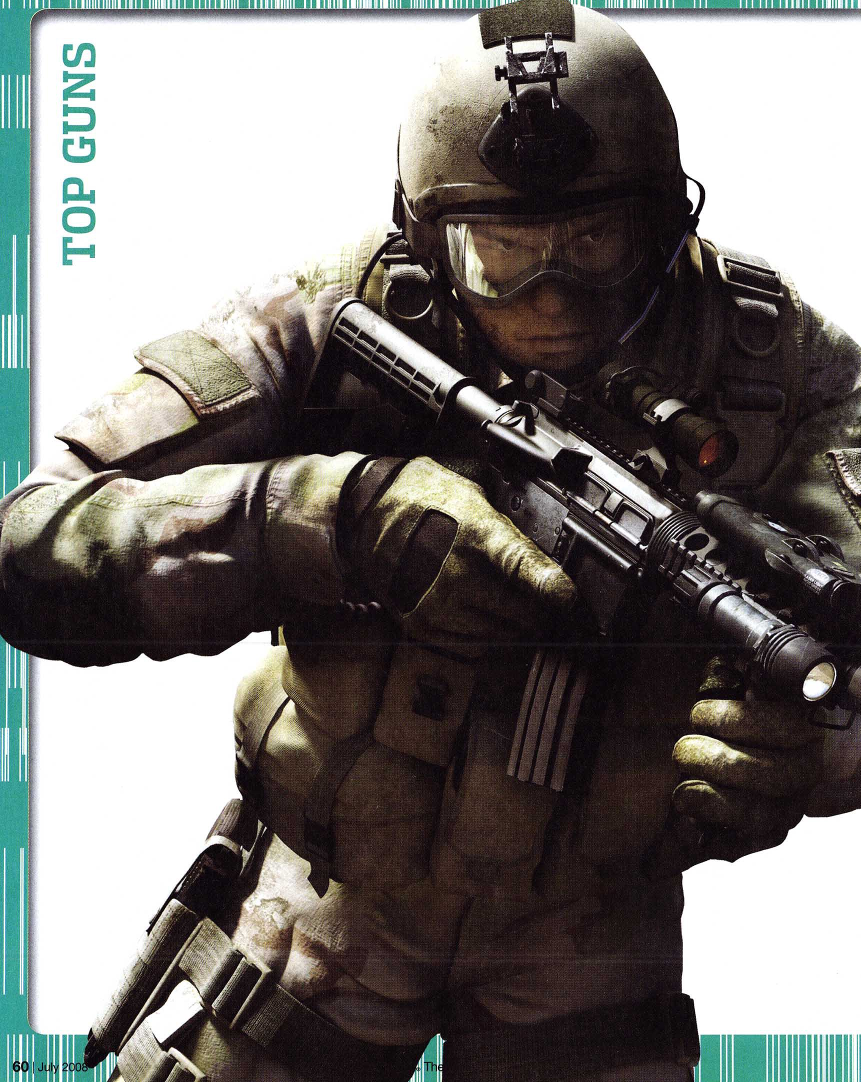


Free trapped LEGO World villagers from the evil king and his minions by clearing levels of bricks with your ball and paddle. Uncover game-saving power-ups, such as extra paddles and even a gun you can use to blast bricks, as you progress though four detailed and mysterious worlds, including the Forest Kingdom and Samurai Dynasty.

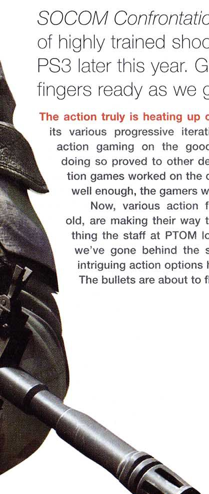
CHECK OUT MORE GREAT GAMES AND APPLICATIONS AT HANDSON.COM

TO GET ANY OF THE GAMES LISTED HERE TEXT THE PROVIDED KEYWORD TO 46966

The Best New Web Videos
Every Day
Garbage Free
Find Something Good
THE BIG STORY
MUSLIM IMAMS SUING AIRLINE FOR DISCRIMINATION
CNN VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY
LIVE
HILLARY
OBAMA
gloob.tv
fresh hand-picked web videos



Super SHOOTER Round-up



SOCOM Confrontation leads the squad of highly trained shooters heading to PS3 later this year. Get your trigger fingers ready as we go to war…

The action truly is heating up on PlayStation 3. *SOCOM,* in its various progressive iterations set new standards for action gaming on the good old PlayStation 2, and in doing so proved to other developers that compelling action games worked on the console, and if they were built well enough, the gamers would come.

Now, various action franchises, some new, some old, are making their way to the platform. If there's one thing the staff at PTOM love, it's a good gunfight, and we've gone behind the scenes of some of the most intriguing action options heading to PS3 later this year. The bullets are about to fly.

SOCOM Confrontation
Development studio Slant Six is taking the reins as SCEA prepares to bring its hugely popular military shooter franchise on to PlayStation 3. We get the full skinny from the game's design director. **p.62**

Red Faction: Guerrilla
GeoMod technology burst onto the PC scene with the original *Red Faction,* introducing deformable, destructible terrain to the traditional sci-fi shooter. Now it's back, and powered by Cell technology. **p. 66**

Mercenaries 2
The original game was the top-selling new franchise when it launched to great critical acclaim. This sequel promises more open world action and a strong likelihood of upsetting the Venezuelan President. **p. 68**

Battlefield: Bad Company
B-Company is where the army puts its problem soldiers. Clearly, that's also where you're likely to find the most fun. We get our hands-on a near final build and put it through its paces. **p.70**

Aliens Colonial Marines
Though it may have taken a while to get into production, all *Aliens* fans should offer praise that talented studio Gearbox is driving this fantastic-looking shooter. Expect all the right scares! **p.72**

By: Chris Hudak, Gary Steinman, Rob Smith, Scott Butterworth

SOCOM Confrontation

SCEA's leading shooter gets the next-gen makeover for the hugely anticipated leap onto PlayStation 3.

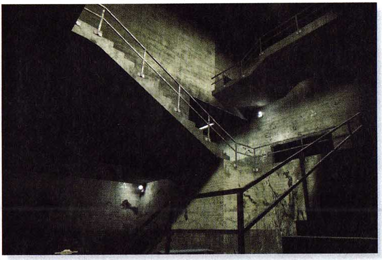
Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE:
Fall

GENRE:
Urban Gentrification

PUBLISHER:
SCEA

DEVELOPER:
Slant Six



Using the shadows to stay out of enemy view will be an important tactic as you navigate some of the remade classic maps.

SOCOM Confrontation uses the Sixaxis controls to let you lean out from cover, and take a peek at your targets. In this case, to see the truck go *Boom!*

The *SOCOM* franchise has been a standout on PlayStation platforms since its release on PS2, with updates and upgrades introducing new features such as voice communication, and setting a standard for online play on the console. With development duties at Slant Six, we pressed the studio's design director, DAVID SEYMOUR for the inside skinny on what to expect.

As your first entry in the *SOCOM* franchise, how did working on *Tactical Strike* (on PSP) prepare you for this game? Will any ideas employed in that game find their way into *Confrontation?*

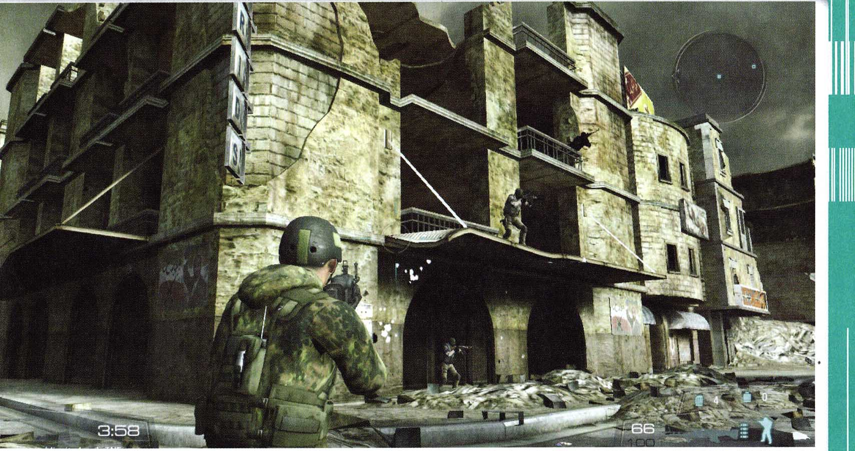
Developing *Tactical Strike* meant that we had been deep in the *SOCOM* mindset well before *Confrontation* got started, and we'd been working with the SEAL consultants and the team at [original *SOCOM* developer] Zipper so we knew what would be required when we signed up. The biggest idea from *Tactical Strike* that made it into *Confrontation* is the international Special Forces, which was a really satisfying feature to include. All of our weapon, level design, and character research was directly applicable to the *Confrontation* pre-production design, not to mention the team's enthusiasm to take another shot at *SOCOM.*

In terms of game design, it seems like *Confrontation* will be a return to the more close-quarters combat of the first two *SOCOMs.* To what extent are the original games guiding this game's design?

Listening to the *SOCOM* fan community made it clear that the majority of players wanted a return to focused, intimate urban combat which the team felt was best represented in *SOCOM II.* Weapon accuracy and movement speed among numerous other details of *SOCOM II* created an overall sense of immediacy, intensity, and realism that had people hooked. So in many ways this is a huge source of inspiration and guidance for the design of *Confrontation.* Many things are solidly rooted in the *SOCOM II* style including the approach to weapon accuracy, the crouch-to-stand mechanic, the classic camera, and the approach to servers and rooms for custom games. At the same time, there are changes. The encumbrance system is completely dynamic, changing your speed as you acquire or drop heavier weapons and is affected by your choice of body armor. The armor system and the bullet penetration system bring new tactical considerations into the play, and mean that cover from some weapons may not protect you from other larger weapons that deliver more projectile force. Physics-based grenades in combination with Sixaxis control allow you to throw, lob or roll grenades very naturally. And finally, the Sixaxis lean and cover system is a real evolution to the gameplay, allowing for the continuous variable use of the environment as cover in a very realistic way that "snap on" cover systems cannot match.

Given that there are quite a few reality-based military shooters out there these days what is going to set *Confrontation* apart from the pack?

SOCOM inhabits its own space in the world of online shooters, and you have to really get your head inside the game for a while to realize how unique it is. The third-person perspective in *SOCOM* really defines the feel of the play, and in *Confrontation* the game is fully third-person now; it isn't possible to go to an "empty-screen"



Fond recollections of your previous SOCOM encounters will be revived in *Confrontation*, but now with all the detail possible on PS3.

first-person view. The pacing of the play, the blend of authentic weapons and special forces and *SOCOM's* signature game modes such as Breach, Escort, VIP, and Demolition all factor in. It may be however, that the community features in *Confrontation* will make the largest difference. The scope of the clan, tournament, and ladder systems combined with the character customization, the stat tracking, the community website, the party system, and the in-game communication features are really going to unite and motivate the player community in ways that few console games do.

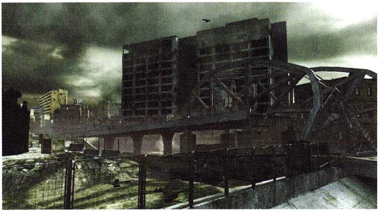
Have any of the other military shooters influenced your game's design in any way?

We loved getting close to the detail and articulation of the characters in *GRAW 2,* but we wanted our controls to feel very fast and responsive relative to that game's pacing, and so we considered that in the design of our new camera system. It was also important to us to have a consistent camera perspective rather than switching between first- and third-person modes. We knew we wanted to bring cover and the level environment more deeply into the gameplay of *Confrontation,* but it was critical that we avoided a "stop-and-pop" style of gameplay, which works really well in *Rainbow Six Vegas,* but just didn't suit *SOCOM,* which pushed us to the current Sixaxis lean and cover system.

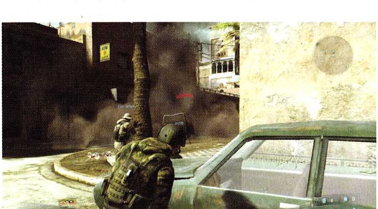
The *SOCOM* games featured a really extensive number of weapons. What can you tell us about the weapons in *Confrontation?*

The total number of weapons is similar to that of *SOCOM Combined Assault,* but with a tuning style that is mix of *SOCOM I* and *II.* There are some new weapons including the GMP and the SFCR-LW, with more than 30 weapons in total. Weapon balance has to take into account the longer draw distance on PS3, the bullet penetration and the physics-driven ➔

> The third-person perspective really defines the feel of the play, and so *Confrontation* is fully third-person now.



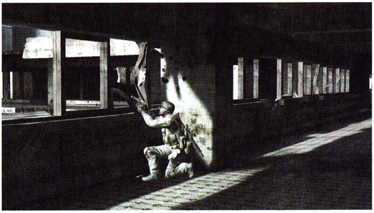
A mix of new maps, along with the return of reimagined and retextured classics should provide plenty of options for series veterans and newcomers.



The longer draw distance of the PS3 required the developers to rework the bullet physics as you'll be able to see their impact in the world at greater distances.

4:40
dave): TNF

We ran out of captions at this point, so send your best caption for this screenshot to PTOM_letters@futureus.com



It may look lonely for the moment, but with 32-player firefights planned, you can be pretty sure of company soon enough.

(12X): TNF
(30m): TNF

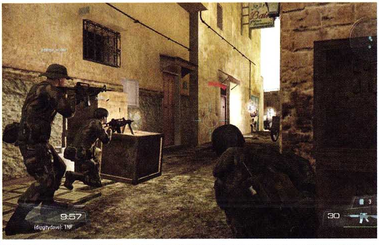
Breathe slowly, slow the heart rate, and gently squeeze the trigger. This guy will be respawning in 3...2...1...

nature of the game engine and we have adhered to a weapon balance philosophy that emphasizes the strengths and weakness of each weapon without allowing any one weapon to dominate multiple situations and styles of play.

> More classic maps is something we're very interested in doing as part of future expansions.

How does the cover system work with the Sixaxis?

The Sixaxis cover controls allow you a huge range of motion to lean your character left, right, up, and down. This means that you can use a corner, and just bend out enough to clear your weapon and keep your profile very small while you fire down an alley. It also means that in crouch-to-run mode, you can sprint for cover behind a car, drop into crouch and then stretch up just enough to clear the car and fire from cover. But you don't need to be against the cover—these controls work everywhere. There is also a low position, where your SEAL will pull down behind very low cover. This is great for ranged shoot outs or attempted snipes where you realize your target has you made, and you have to duck and cover immediately! You can lean left by tilting the controller while creeping forward to the wall with the left analog stick and trimming your aim with the right analog stick to pick off a target through a tiny gap while only exposing your helmet and shoulder and the feeling is very rewarding. There is a huge amount of flexibility and variation in the system, and it has a real component of skill to use it very well so we feel it adds depth to the gameplay rather than providing a crutch to the player that could stifle the flow of the game.



Planned community functions will encourage ***SOCOM*** players to band together in clans, and provide them with the ability to customize identifying insignia.

Did the fact that this game will support 32-player matches present any technical or design challenges?

Design-wise it was critical to create enough space for 32 players to keep true to the tactical, team-driven nature of *SOCOM* without the rounds turning into complete chaos. At the same time, it was necessary to keep things tight and focused so that the encounter times felt right and the action stayed tense. This involved a great deal of level iteration, and that is how we determined the 16-player versus the 32-player layouts on each map. 32 high-resolution characters with extensive character customization options and a vast array of weapons to choose from is also a huge challenge to fit in memory because the permutations are so huge that every character is essentially unique.

How has the move to PS3 changed the game?

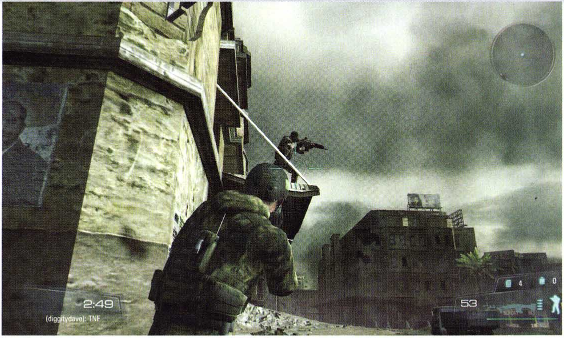
Being able to run many simulation tasks concurrently via the SPU's meant that we could keep loading on the details, such as bullet penetration, animating foliage, shadows, physics-driven shell casings, completely procedural climb detection and so on while maintaining our performance. The increased draw distance had a big impact on gameplay because the classic maps had been balanced for the fog, and suddenly the players were shooting from one end of the map to the other, which required some rework of prop layouts and spawn point protection.

We already know that fan favorite map Crossroads will be returning. Can we expect to see the return of any other classic maps?

Crossroads is joined by fan-favorite classic maps Desert Glory and Frost Fire. Each of these maps was rebuilt with the original source data as reference. Minor adjustments for scale and architectural detail were made to all of the maps, but they are very faithful to the originals. Testing our locomotion and weapon systems in maps where we knew the gameplay inside and out allowed us to be sure that the game mechanics were coming together correctly. More classic maps are something we are very interested in doing as part of future expansions.

To what extent will the maps be destructible and/or interactive?

Each map has one or two routes that can be opened or closed by blowing up some part of the environment, but these are always designed map flows. Random destruction of the map sounds exciting at first and we explored it, but the toll it takes on the map flow and therefore the balance of the maps was too high to pursue. Instead, we have a comprehensive materials and thickness-driven bullet penetration system, and many destructible props which have a huge effect on the gameplay. Water and swimming are also back in several of the maps, which has a subtle but important strategic impact on several of the modes. ■



Picking the right weapon for the job at hand will take some trial and practice with over 30 different weapons providing options for all distances and locations.

Community Services

For details on the community aspects of *SOCOM Confrontation,* we got the skinny direct from SETH LUISI, SCEA's Director of Development:

What can you tell us about the bluetooth headset planned for the retail version?

There will be more information to come, but here are some of the core features: it's an Official Bluetooth Headset that will include advanced features not available with any other Bluetooth headset. The dual microphone design allows for high quality noise cancelation. It's also compatible with any PS3 game that supports headset functionality, and will also support compatible mobile phones.

Community and communication were always an important part of the *SOCOM* multiplayer experience. How will the party system and in-game communication work this time around?

The party system will allow you to very easily invite your friends into a party and join a game together as a group. We've also enhanced how you communicate with other players. In addition to the normal push-to-talk voice chat system for your teammates, we've also added a voice activated proximity chat system. This allows you to very easily chat with players around you without having to push a button. The sound also takes on the characteristics of the environment you are in. However, you have to be careful with this system as everyone around you can hear you when you talk, even the enemy.

Only those who join clans will be able to play as Special Forces members and have access to the customization features that come with those characters. Was this done specifically to encourage people to join clans? And what can you tell us about the clan system in general?

This was done for two reasons:

First, we did want to encourage players to join clans. *SOCOM* is a team-based game and players who play as a team not only have a better chance of winning, they also have a lot more fun.

Second, we wanted to allow clans to have their own look. Basing them on real world special forces allowed for more variety in the look of clans as well as added to the authenticity of the experience. Clan leaders can also further customize the look of their clan by creating a clan badge and adjusting the color of some elements of the clan members' uniforms.

Can you give any details about character customization? Will it be purely cosmetic or will it affect gameplay? Will there be unlockable content?

The character customization is both cosmetic and tactical. You want to have the right camo pattern and color for each environment. We allow you to save several different pre-sets for different environment types. It also affects you armor value, which in turn will affect your encumbrance and movement speed.

Weapon customization was first introduced in *SOCOM 3* and it returns in *SOCOM Confrontation.* Customizing your weapon plays a considerable part in determing what type of role you will play on the battlefield.

Can you tell us about the private beta being conducted with the hardcore *SOCOM* enthusiasts?

We are starting a Private Beta for *SOCOM Confrontation* where we are going to invite the best of the *SOCOM* community to participate. This will give our biggest fans a chance to see the game at an earlier state than a normal Public Beta and provide feedback on what they like or dislike. We want to know what the fans think while we still have time to make changes to the end product.

Rumor has it that original developer Zipper Interactive is somehow involved in the development of *Confrontation.*

Periodically, we have the team at Zipper take a look at the game and provide feedback. However, they are too busy working on their own, as yet unannounced, project.

As a Producer and Director of Development at SCEA, I've provided direction on all of the *SOCOM* titles from the initial concept for *SOCOM I* to *SOCOM II, SOCOM 3, SOCOM Fireteam Bravo, SOCOM Combined Assault, SOCOM Fireteam Bravo 2, SOCOM Tactical Strike,* and now *SOCOM Confrontation.*

In addition to the traditional hard copy, *Confrontation* is going to be digitally distributed on the PlayStation Network. What prompted this decision?

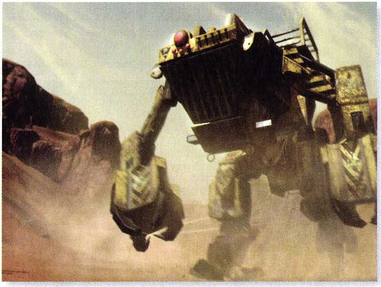
SOCOM Confrontation was always intended to be an online only, downloadable title. The decision to release a Blu-ray version bundled with a headset and exclusive making-of content came later.

Since the online portion of previous *SOCOM* games was so popular I really wanted to create an online-only *SOCOM* where we focused all of our effort on the online portion of the game. As an online-only title, it made sense to sell it online as well. I hope that gamers will view this as the ultimate *SOCOM* Online experience, since that is what we are trying to deliver.

Red Faction: Guerilla

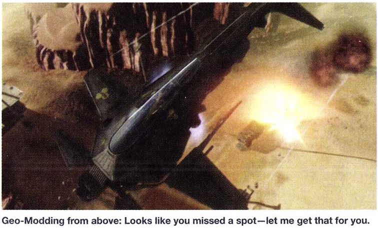
You can't fight City Hall, but you can goddamn sure blow it up

Hands-On PREVIEW



Now THIS is how you do the disgruntled-worker-storming-the-workplace thing.

> Let's just let the players blow up everything in the game... the vehicles, the walls, the floors, everything.



Geo-Modding from above: Looks like you missed a spot—let me get that for you.

You say you want a revolution? Apparently, so do the folks at Volition—to the point that they're staging an open revolt against their own established *Red Faction* cosmology...and you're invited to a demolition party six years in the making.

No longer content with the ambitious, but ultimately limited, Geo-Mod terrain deformation mechanics introduced in the first two games (which in a sense caused as many gameplay constraints and problems as they set out to solve), the Volition designers apparently had a process-changing design meeting which concluded with someone finally throwing up his hands and saying "Screw it, let's just let the players blow up everything in the game—the enemy troops, the vehicles, the walls, the floors, everything."

Easy enough to say, harder to accomplish—and yet that seems to be precisely what they've managed to do, as evidenced during our hands-on experience. Even *Red Faction: Guerilla's* story set-up bears the red-mud, Martian miner's bootprint of anarchy and general mayhem.

MEET THE NEW BOSS, SAME AS THE OLD BOSS

It's a depressing, statistical likelihood: Power corrupts. It seems that the formerly heroic, good-guy Earth Defense Forces from the last game were a little *too* successful in their liberating endeavors, and have in rapid succession grown comfortable, fat, complacent, corrupt and finally flat-out, power-mad oppressive. So the (re-)oppressed miners stage a guerilla uprising.

Played from a third-person, follow-cam perspective, *Red Faction: Guerilla* puts you in the shoes of a single rebellious hero with a fashion sense that falls somewhere between Marlboro Man-miner and a square-jawed NYFD firefighter. From what we can tell, the game literally gives you the ability to destroy every last artificial structure on the surface of a far-future Mars.

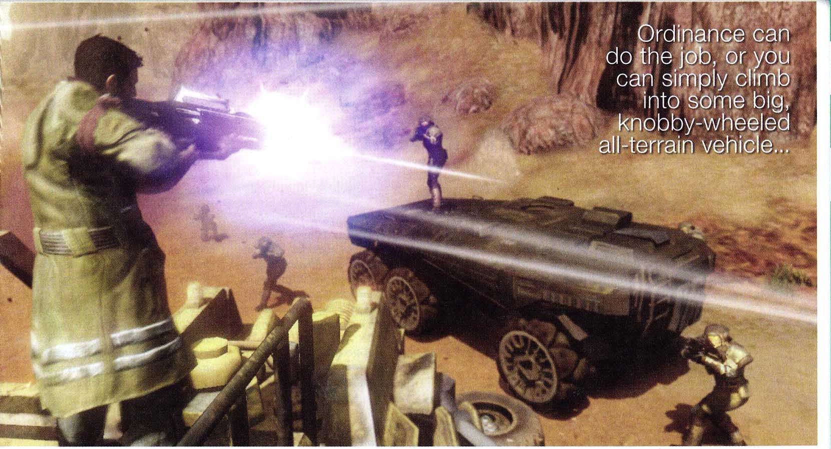
Of course, while such a scorched-Mars approach would surely hurt The Enemy, it's not going to go far toward winning the hearts and minds of The People; destroying the structures of the oppressed locals as well as the overseeing baddies willy-nilly won't make you any friends—and you might want their help.

WHEN THE WALLS COME TUMBLIN' DOWN

In addition to the new camera perspective and radically-expanded destruction options, *Guerilla* is designed with a sand-boxy, free-roaming, mission-based scheme. NPC miners go hither and thither about their business in a wide-open Martian landscape—low red hills and craggy canyons sparsely dotted with weathered, worn barracks, vehicles, mining-camp structures, and other dingy facilities, all of which can be destroyed piece-by-piece.

Remote mines, RPGs, grenade launchers and other ordnance can do the job, or you can climb into some big, knobby-wheeled all-terrain vehicle and do an ATM ram-job on the side of a building—preferably an Earth Defense Force facility—before you blaze in shooting, or swinging, or whatever. And illustrating Volition's total dedication to property-damage you can simply pick up a sledgehammer and start taking out chunks of the scenery by hand. It's definitely a slower road to building demolition...but you can do it, if, like, you *have* to.

But that's not exactly styling, is it? By far the most impressive example of sheer, joyful "environment-modding" comes when you take command of one of the immense walker/'mech units—

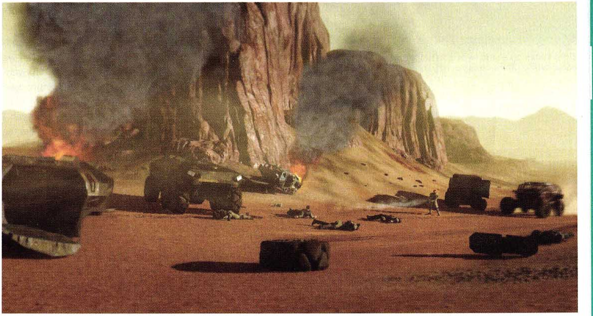


Ordinance can do the job, or you can simply climb into some big, knobby-wheeled all-terrain vehicle...

Keep yourself off the oppressed miners' S-List, because fighting the EDF goons is job enough.

presumably originally intended for heavy-duty mining work, clearly adopted here for indelicate insurgency purposes. Strapped into these clanking behemoths it's almost ridiculously easy to smash through barriers and buildings and chew through reinforcing walls like a bipedal bulldozer waltzing the shortest path through Legoland.

The physics of weakened and toppling buildings look promising, too, with domino-effect, support-pillar failings, and creaky, delayed collapses. And of course, the AI enemies are looking for the same structural weaknesses you're creating. Blowing a hole in a wall or floor may be all shiznits-and-giggles for you...until the EDF response-team soldiers start pouring men, explosives or depleted uranium shells through the very fissures you just made.



The first (and final) Martian Grand Prix is alternatively declared "an abysmal failure," "a really bad idea," or "fun for the whole family."

PLEASE BE NICE TO THE LOCALS

Of course, even on this criminally-mismanaged red planet, you'll want to keep the friendly fire and collateral damage on non-enemy structures to a minimum, and not just to save your own hide; the measure of your insurgent success in the game comes in the form of Resistance Points—stick it to The Man consistently enough, and new missions and side-endeavors will open up, as long as you're not upsetting the locals by destroying their property. Get in good with the miners by poking the EDF forces, and you may find those ambient, wandering non-player characters coming to your aid in the heat of battle.

And if you don't feel like following a meticulously-crafted, branching-mission-guided structure? Again, the overriding (or "under-mining," if you prefer) philosophy seems to be "screw it"—you can free-form your way through the whole game, *GTA*-style, if you're so inclined. It's up to you. *Red Faction: Guerilla* is slated to hit in 2009, when you can fight the Powers That Be with an unprecedented level of destructive license. ■

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE:
2009

GENRE:
Mars Union Recruiter

PUBLISHER:
THQ

DEVELOPER:
Volition

Mercenaries 2: World in Flames

Jes, You Can

Hands-On PREVIEW

Eight klicks on a side (it seems bigger, when you're in there), the *Mercenaries 2* game-world offers considerably more environmental variety than its predecessor.

> I've got two words for you blowing-stuff-up fetishists out there: "Tactical nuke."

Electronic Arts' Devin Bennett has a neat, succinct way of summing up the driving design-principle behind the forthcoming *Mercenaries 2: World in Flames.* You should, he says, imagine the following hypothetical exchange:

CURIOUS POTENTIAL PLAYERS:
"Can we—?"
DESIGN TEAM *[interrupting]:*
"Yes."

Can we commandeer any vehicle in the game? Yes. Even the helicopters, tanks, trucks that clearly belong to the enemy, small beached motorboats littering the seashores, and the row of junker autos parked behind some sleazy little Venezuelan roadside cantina like rust-and-primer stage-dressing? *Si.* Can we tackle missions from unconventional angles, and with improvised attacks? Affirmative. Can we blow up anything in the game? *Boo*-yah. I mean *any*thing in the game, like the very buildings? Oh, yes.

No, but seriously—I mean *ANY*thing, like, say, a big mansion or enemy compound, or something on that scale? Yes indeedy. If a mission isn't going well, can we just say "screw it," radio in an airstrike, and take out an entire city block with a cruise missile or some hellish air-fuel bomb? Roger that.

(And I've got two words for you blowing-stuff-up fetishists out there: "Tactical nuke.")

You take the role of one of the three colorful mercenaries introduced in the original *Mercenaries: Playground of Destruction*—Mattias Nilsson, Jennifer Mui, and Chris Jacobs—alternately working for (and against) six unique factions as they destroy their way across a near-future Venezuela alive with paramilitary intrigue, in a sprawling, messy, anything-goes war for the country's oil...and personal satisfaction...

Beyond the "Can we—?" approach, another of the principles central to *World in Flames* is that of "Payback, *Mercenaries* style," which involves concepts like "Disproportionate Response." You shoot a handgun at me, I'm gonna fire an RPG at you; you throw a hand grenade at me, I'm gonna lob ten bales of C4 at you; you take a rocket-launcher to my base, I'm gonna bring a tank to yours; you cluster-bomb my base, I'm gonna *nuke* yours.

The overarching story is the same regardless of the character you choose, but—a nice touch—each one of our heroes has some unique dialogue lines, facial expressions, and other idiosyncrasies in the cinematic (and surprisingly humorous) cutscenes, to play up their particular personality.

Mercenaries 2 trades in the comparatively drained, drab North Korean palette of its precursor for the rich and extremely varied Venezuelan environs: Twisting mountain roads with jungle on one side and sheer-cliff drop-offs on the other; sprawling, filthy-rich seaside manors; white-sand shores adorned with cabanas and beached fishing boats (or the massive steel jacks of tank-traps); squalid shantytowns of plywood and corrugated metal; and the modern city streets of Caracas, circa 2010—a date not at all far off.

(It all might seem a little *too* close, for some. Here's how entertaining and cool the game is looking to be:

Lucky indeed is the enemy who can escape your vengeful wrath, for—oh, wait, nevermind; you got him.

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: Summer 2008

GENRE: Pre-Invasion Simulator

PUBLISHER: EA

DEVELOPER: Pandemic

Getting flame-mailed by a Latin American bonktatorship...*that* is pre-release street cred.

All this unpleasantness, because one guy shot our Hero in the arse. (No, *really.*)

The government of Venezuelan nut-job-in-chief Hugo Chavez has officially criticized *World in Flames* as—wait for it—a joint plot by Pandemic Studios and the United States government to drum up popular support for an attack on Venezuela. Watch in awe, Rockstar. When your development studio is getting flame-mailed by a Latin American bonktatorship because your game makes them nervous…ladies and gentlemen, *that* is pre-release street cred.

If you find something more satisfying than the air strikes in this game, you're gonna want a sandwich or a cigarette afterwards.

JES, AGAIN!

The name *World in Flames* says it all. From what we've seen so far, the sandboxy, over-the-top, Hollywood-blockbuster approach to freeform destruction is at least as compelling and addictive as any national dependence on foreign oil.

Here is a game in which you can: Swim out to a small motorboat and steal it from a Rastafarian pirate; run the boat across a bay and right up onto the nearest beach; shoot a grappling hook onto a helicopter hovering overhead; zip up the line to the skid of the helo and hijack it (by yanking the current pilot right out of his seat); land smack in the middle of the nearest armory; take a tank for a joyride through some luckless Venezuelan slum; jump out of said tank at the last minute (ghost-riding the thing into the nearest river in the process); and finally drop a daisy-cutter on the magnificently-appointed *Isla de Margarita* stronghold of some counterrevolutionary greaseball—all because you were too lazy to barge in there and waste all 36 of his on-site goons by hand.

(And all of this might be before you tackle your *primary* objective).

The anything-can-happen physics can make for some jaw-dropping moments: In one mission, I had to bail out of my speeding jeep, because it was getting lit up by half a dozen gunners at the heavily-defended gate down the road. As my abandoned jeep continued to roll forward, some AI genius apparently lobbed an explosive charge *onto* it—at which point the now-suicide-jeep-bomb rolled straight to the gates and detonated as pretty as you please, taking the whole damned checkpoint down. Saved me an air strike, that one did.

Mercenaries: World in Flames is scheduled to ship in this summer. No word yet if Hugo Chavez has pre-ordered his copy. ■

Pick a Merc

You can take any of the three protagonist mercs into the various missions, and while they have equal access to the extensive *World in Flames* arsenal, they all have slightly different attributes that make them particularly suitable to certain situations: Chris is the big dude, physically imposing but not the fastest mover; Jen is the lithe, precision-attack sniper of the three, only slightly more likely to take damage as a trade-off to her surgical-strike skills; Mattias (voiced by Swedish-American actor Peter Stormare, who played the creepy thug-of-few-words in *Fargo,* was the voice of Johann Strauss. in *Quake 4,* and played no less than the Devil himself in *Constantine)* is the closest to insane of the bunch, the kind of guy who likes big explosions and would just as soon paint you for a laser-guided bomb as look at you...

Battlefield: Bad Company

Fighting for your right to make a killing out of war

Hands-On PREVIEW

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: June

GENRE: Rural Sightseeing

PUBLISHER: EA

DEVELOPER: DICE

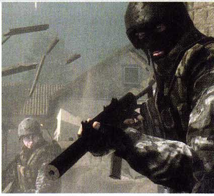
» If you like your war with plenty of personality, huge explosions, extensive vehicles, and massive environments, then *Battlefield: Bad Company* might be the perfect choice from other more sterile and "realistic" options. In virtually your first encounter as new recruit Preston Marlowe, a quick scan down the gunsight reveals red-painted barrels that'll explode with a pyromaniac's delight if you pound a few rounds into them. So what do you do?

This battlefield, pretty as it is in most areas, is littered with caches of highly volatile material that can turn rolling countryside into roiling wastelands and quaint farmhouses into smoldering wreckage in a heartbeat. If you don't bring the destruction this way, maybe you'll fancy driving your APC over the sandbag barricades and straight through the walls. While you're driving, one of your three AI squad mates can be manning the gun and cutting down enemy soldiers all the while.

Oh, and just a couple of quick missions into your deployment in this hostile area, you're manning a massive artillery gun to rain down the hurt on tanks and personnel carriers fast-approaching some of your infantry. So driving vehicles (including helicopters), using C4 on gun emplacements, finding "collectible" weapons in disused farmhouses nestled away from the main road, and shooting the bejeebus out of well-trained, well-armed, and well-positioned Russian soldiers is all part of the experience in the opening hours of gameplay. This is a new kind of *Battlefield* game, displaying the series' hallmarks of open-environment exploration and manning various vehicles—but this time bringing a fun, lighthearted (yet potentially deadly) storyline to drive the action forward.

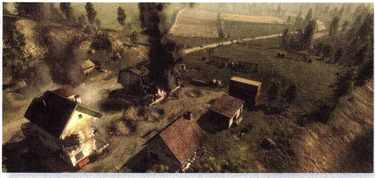
Teamed up with your three mates (Sarge, Sweetwater, and Haggard), it's quickly established that you and your squad could have been in jail, but were instead directed to "B" for "Bad" Company. Your storyline is slowly revealed as your cowboy comrades seek out gold caches among the ruins. Of course, you're still being directed by your military masters (silky-voiced though they may be) and that leads to bridge demolitions and sniping encounters—as well as more vehicle interactions, off-roading through the countryside just to see what you can see.

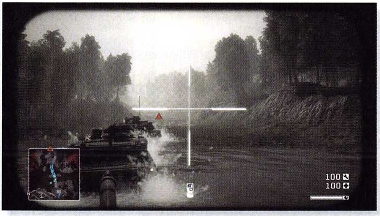
In our playtest we wrangled with some odd control decisions (L1 and L2 for accelerate and brake?), but the style of presentation, long draw distances through the fields, and tight animation among your squad mates illustrated an explosion-filled adventure worth pursuing. We'll have the full review, including a report on how the extensive multiplayer elements shape up, in next month's issue. ■



Character models and animations exhibit terrific attention to detail.

BELOW: What once was a quaint, picturesque village is now smoking rubble after your squad's explosive visit. Well done, fellas.
BOTTOM: Using some wonder vehicle instrument you can fix (heal) your rides at any point.





Resistance 2

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Insomniac Games
Available: Holiday

One of the biggest launch titles for the PS3 came from what initially seemed an unlikely place. Insomniac, developer of cartoony yet brilliant platformer franchises *Ratchet & Clank* and *Spyro the Dragon*, branched out to bring us a first-person shooter centered around man's last stand against a Chimera invasion. For the sequel, the campaign has been relocated from Britain to the U.S.—but it's not the States that we know and love. Instead, it's an alternate take on history, one in which World War II never occurred because we were too busy beating the stuffing out of aliens. But that's all setting. The real excitement comes in the gameplay and the various ways you can subdue those stinkin' aliens: alone, with a pal on the same screen, or online with up to eight total players helping you along the way. Of course, that's just the story mode. The real fun will come in the 60-player online battles—which should be an utterly amazing gameplay experience. We'll be diving into the fray soon enough, so stay tuned to the pages of PTOM for more exclusive details as they emerge.

www.fileradar.net

fileradar.

▸▸ This is the brand new, premier, next-gen game links site, built for the community by the community. FileRadar puts the true power of game file distribution into your hands.

There are millions of sites to download from, and only FileRadar umbrellas them all while empowering you to tell each other not only which are the best files to get, but what are the fastest and easiest places to get them from.

With user feedback and link ratings, you save loads of time, grief, and money, since FileRadar is free to use and update.

DEMOS

MODS

PATCHES

With a thriving community of informed gamers networked together to be the first to either playtest a hot new game or enhance the games you already love, how can you go wrong?

▸▸ You can't, and neither can FileRadar.

▸▸ You now wield this power.

▸▸ Use it. Wisely.

. GAME LINKS . EVOLVED .

Aliens: Colonial Marines

Bust a gut, soldier!

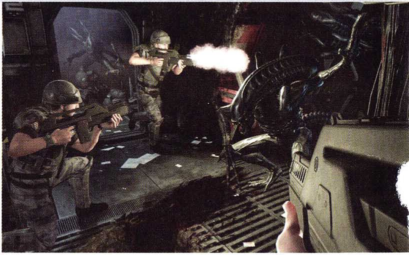
Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE:
Fall

GENRE:
Bug Hunting

PUBLISHER:
Sega

DEVELOPER:
Gearbox



Blast enough xenomorphs and you will quite literally create a bloody mess, with the acidic alien blood eating away at the environment around you.

» Plenty of shooters feature scenes of bloody combat. But how many of those shooters include acid blood?

Blast a xenomorph at close range and you'd best be ready—otherwise, you might get splattered by caustic alien blood with enough acidic bite that it can damage the environment. And if the blood is bitter enough to scar the ship around you, then we can only imagine what it might do to a fleshy Colonial Marine.

That's not the only nifty gameplay possibility we're looking forward to in the Gearbox-developed squad-based shooter set in the world of the James Cameron-directed *Aliens* movie. We also have a hankering to get inside the Sulaco spaceship and see what kind of claustrophobic corridor shootouts we'll be engaging in—especially with three other fellow marines. Even scarier is the prospect of open-area melees. With fewer places to hide, it'll take some serious strategy to survive an alien onslaught.

Set after the events of *Aliens 3, Colonial Marines* stars a six-person team sent to the USS Sulaco to find out what happened to Ripley and her missing crew. The single-player game unfolds in chapter-like levels, with a different marine leading off every episode. (Don't worry, there are more than six levels.) As for the multiplayer, you'll have the option to play online or off alongside three other marines fending off the xenomorph horde. You'll have to watch out for each other even as you keep an eye on your own hide—each of your fellow soldiers has a different specialist skill, and you'll need every unique ability you've got to survive.

The Alien franchise has always been known for its eerie atmosphere; a brief glance at the screenshots on this page should reassure you that *Colonial Marines* is more than sufficient in that regard. The spookiness extends to the gameplay, with some levels focusing more on sneaking about, trying to avoid a firefight. In the opening mission, for example, you'll be skulking around the Sulaco trying to locate any lifeforms. At one point, an alien might drag you into an air vent, stowing you away to breed with later on. At that point, the game reveals another facet: Quick Time Events, in which you have to move in the correct direction in order to trigger the appropriate action. In the case of our entrapped marine, if you press up you might fire your rifle at the alien, causing him to scamper away; or, you might press right to elbow open an escape route. These QTEs are scattered throughout the game, adding a lot to the story and the atmosphere. That...and the acidic blood. ■

All's quiet—which is exactly why you should be nervous...

Whether they want to breed with you or simply gobble up your innards, those aliens know how to show a soldier a good time.

Haze

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Free Radical
Available: Now

No shooter roundup would be complete without mention of *Haze*, the highly anticipated PS3-exclusive from Free Radical. A morality play of sorts—you eventually escape your drug-fueled haze to realize you're being manipulated to fight for the wrong side—the game features two distinct styles of play. Early on, you've got access to the skill-enhancing (but mind-clouding) Nectar, allowing you to blast away with impunity. Later, when you join the rebels you were initially contracted to hunt down, you have to fight clean, forcing you to place a greater focus on strategy and tactics. We received review builds right as we were going to press, so look for our final take on the game next issue!

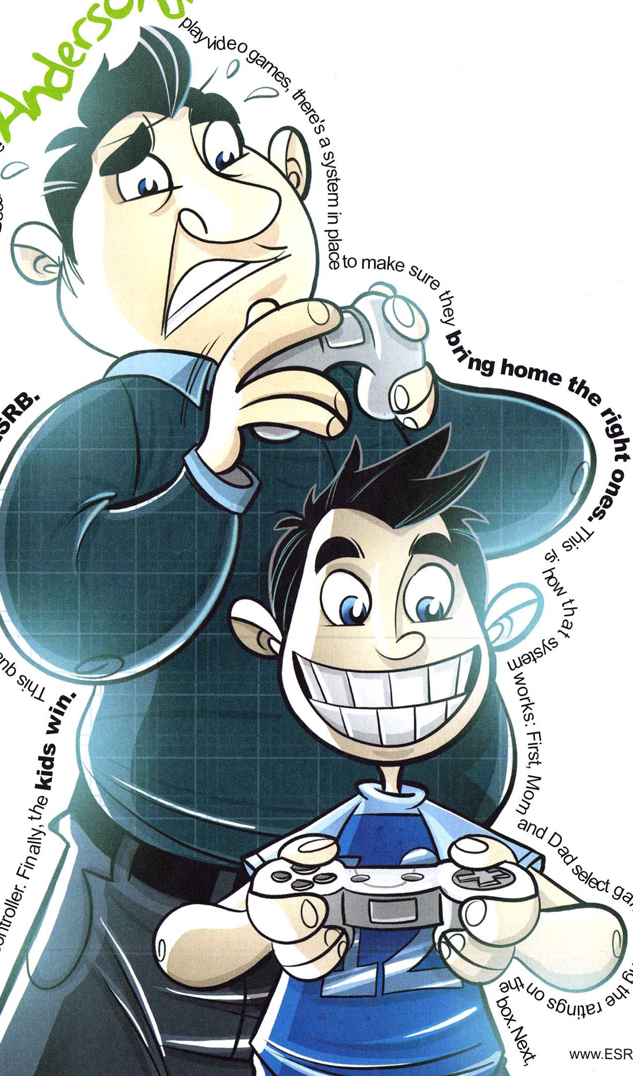
do you have what it takes?
navy.com/eod

© 2007. Paid for by the U.S. Navy. All rights reserved.

EVERYONE

E

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Because the **Andersons** play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Next, everyone gets a controller. Finally, the **kids win.** This quality time is presented by the **ESRB.**

rights reserved.

www.ESRB.org

Reviews

Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice | Hardware

RATINGS

★★★★★ **EXCEPTIONAL**
An excellent game that takes its genre to new heights.

★★★★ **GREAT**
Not flawless, but a truly great game and among the best in its genre.

★★★ **OKAY**
An overall positive experience for fans of the genre or subject matter.

★★ **POOR**
Suffers from several major flaws that really damage the experience.

★ **AWFUL**
Not worth your time or money.

LEGO Indiana Jones p 76

Meet the experts delivering your buying advice

For Indy, it's snakes. This month, we delve into the PTOM psyche to see what creeps us out.

ROB SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Mottephobia**
Yep, Rob's big fear is moths (he hates the fluttery buggers). Way to uphold the British standard, Rob! Good thing the Germans didn't have squadrons of 'em at Dunkirk or we'd all be playing SpieleStationen.
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: The thought of manual labor, linen shopping, camping, and...peanut butter. (Er, the chunky or the creamy kind?)

NOW PLAYING: Indoor co-ed soccer, *GTA IV, Gran Turismo 5 Prologue, Call of Duty 4*

TERESA DUN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Scoleciphobia**
Worms are Teresa's big weakness. Actually, it's walking outside after it rains, because that's when all the worms and snails come out, but science has yet to name that specific phobia because it is so uniquely weird.
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: A world without food. (Teresa loves good food.) Mean dogs that chase her. Nightmares about spiders.

NOW PLAYING: *PixelJunk Monsters Encore, Crisis Core, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*

KEN BOUSQUET
ART DIRECTOR

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Spermatophobia**
No, it's not what you think! Ken has a fear of germs or more specifically, dirty sponges that sit and fester by the sink to serve as a breeding ground for germs. This makes Ken very, very angry. Please stop scaring us now, Ken.
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: Serif fonts, games lacking a linear structure, blondes, SpongeBob SquarePants, and open-ended deadlines.

NOW PLAYING: Indoor co-ed soccer, *Assassin's Creed, echochrome*

GARY STEINMAN
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Alektorophobia**
Gary has a problem with chicken—uncooked chicken in particular. Don't worry, big guy, they're just as scared of you as you are of them. And remember, you're uncooked too.
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: Claymation dinosaurs, sports games, getting a papercut on the eyeball, dying unloved, and monkey astronauts.

NOW PLAYING: *LEGO Indiana Jones, Crisis Core, echochrome*

ROGER BURCHILL
MANAGING EDITOR

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Coulrophobia**
Roger fears clowns for their inherent creepiness. What are they hiding behind all that face paint? How do they all fit in one little car? Worst of all, they're not funny!
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: Blowing up balloons, earwigs, getting stuck in a pipe, blood oranges, and Angry Ken.

NOW PLAYING: *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue, echochrome*

CAMERON LEWIS
EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR

MAJOR PHOBIA: **Hematophobia**
Cameron has no problem with blood in videogames, but having his own blood drawn creeps him out. Which is unfortunate since he has to sell pints of the stuff to supplement his income.
OTHER CREEP-OUTS: Grapes with seeds, the Knee Surgery Channel, people named Lewis Cameron, and pausing live TV.

NOW PLAYING: *GTA IV, Rainbow Six Vegas 2, Bully (PS2)*

Retro View

The big games we were playing this month in PlayStation history.

What can I get you today?

ONE YEAR AGO...

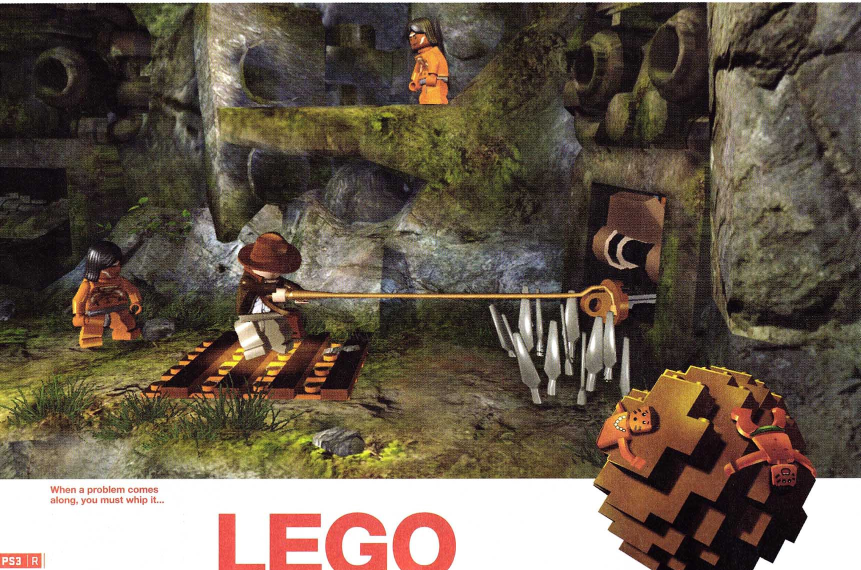
Odin Sphere (PS2)
(9.0 out of 10)
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja 2 (PS2)
(8.0 out of 10)
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords (PSP)
(8.0 out of 10)

FIVE YEARS AGO...

Wakeboarding Unleashed (PS2)
(8 out of 10)
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick (PS2)
(7 out of 10)
Chaos Legion (PS2)
(7 out of 10)

10 YEARS AGO...

Gran Turismo (PS1)
(5 stars)
Vigilante 8 (PS1)
(4.5 stars)
Tomba (PS1)
(4 stars)



When a problem comes along, you must whip it...

LEGO Indiana Jones

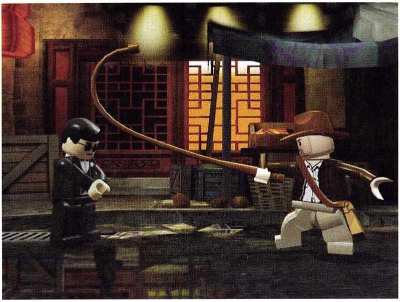
Professor of archeology, obtainer of LEGO antiquities

PS3 PRICE: $49.99 ESRB: E10+ PUBLISHER: LucasArts DEVELOPER: Traveller's Tales

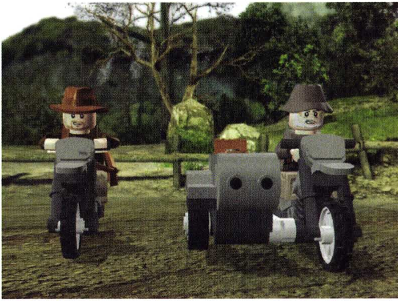
How do you take a horrifyingly grotesque spectacle like a horde of evil Nazis whose faces melt away in divine retribution or a man who instantly mummifies and crumbles to dust (more divine retribution, wee!) or a feast of live monkey brains—and make it cute?

These are precisely the kinds of conundrums that Traveller's Tales had to grapple with in developing *LEGO Indiana Jones*—the latest in what's becoming a favorite franchise for fanboys and families alike. The good news? They once again found a way to make it all work, which should come as no surprise for anyone who's played the previous *Star Wars* releases. Indeed, part of the fun of playing through any of these LEGO games is seeing exactly how the developer takes a familiar movie and rebuilds its memorable scenes brick by brick with a brilliant sense of humor. And it's not just the settings, vehicles, buildings, and furniture; even those little LEGO characters are a sight to behold. Ever wonder what a blocky Marion looks like in a painted-on nightgown? Or how about a LEGO Willie in that slinky red dress from the opening scene of *Temple of Doom*? Sexy? Perhaps not. Cute? Most definitely.

In that way, the LEGO games have managed to occupy the same sort of space as a Pixar movie. They're ostensibly for kids, but they provide an experience that's really built for adults. In the case of *LEGO Indy*, you've got a game your kid brother (or kids, even) will enjoy for the colorful platforming—but, at the same time, you'll dig it for the lively trip down memory lane. Of course, the more you love the *Indiana Jones* movies, the more you'll adore the LEGO version.



...When something's going wrong, you must whip it.



Note the grimaces on the faces of the two Dr. Jones. That's because this motorcycle level is spectacularly unfun.

Missing pieces

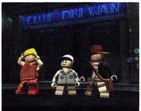
The problem is, Traveller's Tales is no Pixar. They're more like Twentieth Century Fox Animation (y'know, the guys behind *Ice Age* and *Robots*). This is not to say they're bad. In fact, Traveller's Tales has proven itself to be an exceedingly competent codeshop, having honed its skills on numerous licensed platformers before being tapped to handle the *LEGO* franchise. But when you strip away the license and focus on the pure gameplay, *LEGO Indy* reveals itself to be a modestly fun, mostly unbroken game. *But wait,* I can hear you saying, *that sounds pretty swell.* Well, it is. And it isn't.

As with any platformer, the key mechanics here revolve around hopping and bopping, with variations on those two core elements tossed in to keep things interesting. So, for example, Indy bops by flicking his whip, which also helps him reach faraway ledges or grab objects that are just out of reach. Female characters can hop higher than male characters, and small characters like Short Round can crawl through restricted spaces. Meanwhile, other tertiary characters carry with them key items that can be used to trigger puzzles or uncover secrets.

So far so good, but in action these mechanics aren't quite refined enough to launch *LEGO Indy* to the same lofty heights as other top platformers (think *Ratchet & Clank).* Perhaps the most important element to a 3D platformer is a "stickiness" to the actions. Precision skills are important, but equally as essential is the feeling that if you're *this* close to an objective, you'll make that leap or grab that item. All too often, though, you'll miss a jump due to some odd camera angle or find yourself unable to grab hold of an item because of some quirk in the level design. The combat also has its annoying moments, especially when squaring off against an unending wave of respawning grenade-lobbing Nazis who blast you to LEGO bits from a distance. Cheap! Also rough around the edges: vehicles, which thankfully are used in limited doses. Aside from that one vexing motorbike level, you'll be able to avoid vehicular ineptitude for the most part.

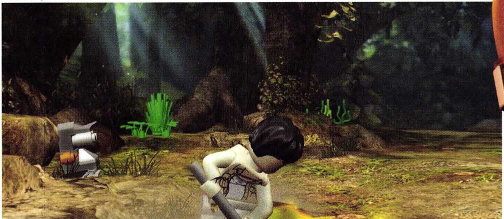
The final frustration stems from the occasionally unclear level

➔

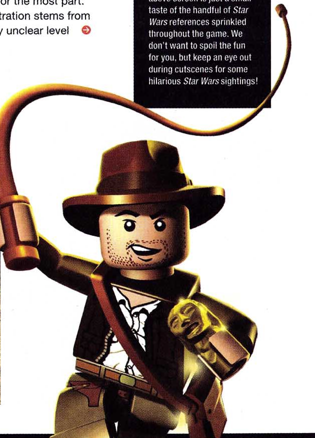


You call this archeology?

Leave it to LucasArts to wedge in some of the greatest crossover cameos ever. The name of the club in the above screen is just a small taste of the handful of *Star Wars* references sprinkled throughout the game. We don't want to spoil the fun for you, but keep an eye out during cutscenes for some hilarious *Star Wars* sightings!



Dig deep to uncover hidden artifacts and other goodies.



Before the advent of the licensed LEGO mini-figure, all LEGO people were yellow and sexless, with "happy and neutral" facial features.

Ahh, Venice.

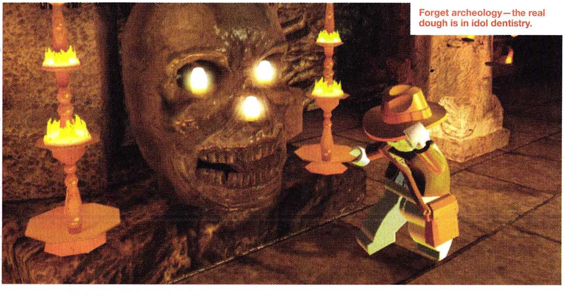
Watch this scene closely for one of the funniest moments in the game...

Building Bonds

At any time, a second player can join you as you play through the game, taking control of a specific set of characters in Story mode or utilizing any unlocked characters during Free Play. As a cooperative experience, *LEGO Indy* is better suited for a father/son or big brother/baby brother bonding session—it's best to have a mature player to help shepherd along a younger gamer. (Basically, someone needs to be in charge.) With two stubborn adults, however, it's more of a goofy lark. Teresa and I spent the better part of a half hour yelling at each other as we dashed about in different directions, until we finally broke down and began a serious (yet devastatingly cute!) brawl between Indy and Short Round. Still fun, but not quite productive...

> “Ever wonder what a blocky LEGO Marion looks like in a painted-on nightgown? Sexy? Perhaps not. Cute? Most definitely.”

objectives; oftentimes, the answer to a particular problem is right in front of your face, but you won't be able to trigger the solution due to a foible in level design that requires you to proceed in the least intuitive way possible. I remember one spot where I had to toss a banana to a monkey, and I tried for a good 20 minutes to get my elephant to grab said banana with his trunk, a maneuver that the pachyderm had performed just a few minutes ago to carry a box of LEGO bricks for me. Using the elephant made sense to me because the glowing banana bunch was hanging above a mud pit of death that only elephants can traverse. After failing spectacularly, I dismounted my ride and tried to grab hold of the banana with my whip while standing at the edge of that dangerous dirt puddle—and once again failed miserably, before hopping atop the elephant again. After several more attempts, I was about to give up when I dismounted my elephant and tried Indy's whip again, this time from an altogether unlikely angle, and finally grabbed that blasted banana. When the fruit of your labor is harvested with such unnecessarily vexing labor, the resulting bounty can be bitter indeed.



Forget archeology—the real dough is in idol dentistry.

Smashing fun

That said, the level design is often extraordinary. I sometimes found myself spending twice the necessary time to beat a level because I was having so much fun smashing everything to LEGO bits, finding all kinds of secrets along the way. I also had a total blast trying to trigger amusing LEGO reactions. Everyone knows, for example, that Indy hates snakes, but seeing him cower in front of a swarm of LEGO serpents is a total crackup.

This is a game that definitely rewards exploration. Sure, you can beat it in a weekend, but you can then eke out triple the amount of play tracking down the almost obscene amount of extras—everything from artifacts for your trophy room to hidden characters that you can bring with you during Free Play mode. In fact, when I first beat the game, I noted that my completion percentage was only at 51.6—and I had already found plenty of artifacts and nabbed True Adventurer status for a good two-thirds of the 18 missions.

And that nicely sums up why the LEGO games are such a success. From one perspective, any LEGO creation might seem rough around the edges, with an abundance of right angles jutting out in unseemly ways. But look again and you'll see a whimsical masterpiece that's much more than the sum of its parts. *LEGO Indy* continues in the grand tradition of the *LEGO Star Wars* games, offering a flawed but compelling experience, whether you're an adult who watched the original *Indiana Jones* movies as a teen or a kid seeking a lighthearted family-friendly romp. Gary Steinman

★★★½

SHOWDOWN LAN 2008

WE'RE BACK!

Showdown LAN, the most kickass LAN party in the country, is coming to a town near you in September 2008.

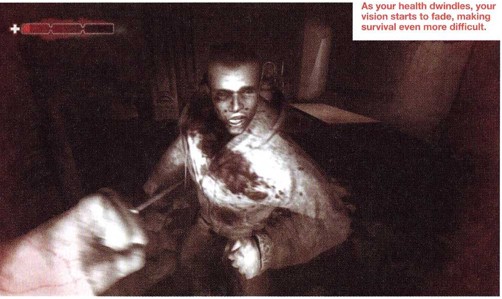
- 500 PC Gamers
- Countless Tournaments
- Tons of Prizes
- The Latest Gaming Hardware
- Game Demos
- NUFF SAID!

Stay tuned for more details in upcoming issues of PC Gamer and Maximum PC magazines

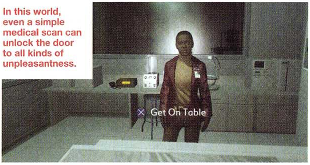
Visit www.showdownlan.com to find out the latest news, sponsors and registration information

Presented by

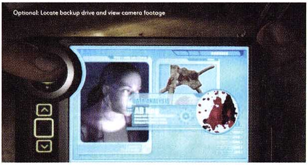
PC GAMER MAXIMUM PC



As your health dwindles, your vision starts to fade, making survival even more difficult.



In this world, even a simple medical scan can unlock the door to all kinds of unpleasantness.



Collect samples in the field and transmit them to Rosa to get the scoop on what each means.

The Unforgettable, a film inspired by *Condemned*, is currently in production.

Condemned 2:

Bloodshot

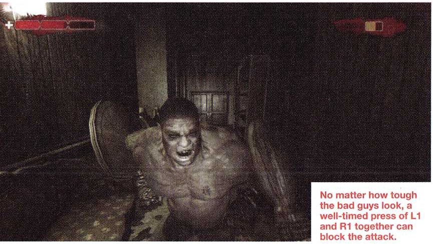
A pitch-dark cocktail of survival horror, street fighting, and crime scene deduction

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Sega DEVELOPER: Monolith Productions

PS3 | R

In the eleven months since the original *Condemned*'s rollercoaster ride of otherworldly serial murder (only available on that *other* system), Metro City has degenerated further into a seething ocean of crime and despair. In apparent desperation, the Serial Crime Unit drags former agent Ethan Thomas from his nightmare of homelessness and alcoholism to investigate the rising tide of violence.

Instead of state-of-the-art artillery, the troubled Ethan is usually left scrounging for a weapon amid the world's debris: a prosthetic arm torn from a mannequin might be faster, but a gumball machine yanked from the ground does more damage. Pistols, shotguns, and rifles are limited to the ammunition each can hold, so *Condemned 2*'s combat replaces familiar aim-and-fire patterns with the wanton visceral impact of melee combinations and chain attacks. Ramming a muscle-bound speedballer's head through a television is a more satisfying coup de grâce than any headshot, even if mastering the timing will often leave you cursing a sporadically maddening checkpoint system.



No matter how tough the bad guys look, a well-timed press of L1 and R1 together can block the attack.

Most first-person games emphasize empowerment, but *Condemned 2* thrills by pursuing a contrary course. The forensic clue-gathering sequences—identifying corpses, determining causes of death, examining splatter patterns, and more with four high-tech tools and multiple choice quizzes—are an absorbing, if fleeting and superficial, mix of logic, observation, and intuition. But looking through Ethan's disturbed eyes means distrusting what they see. *Condemned 2*'s most memorable sequences pile on the visual filters and cacophonous aural disturbances to create the most psychologically oppressive game atmosphere in years. Intermittent technical issues like audio crackling and pregnant pauses to save progress don't diminish the immersion factor much. Whether he's completing optional objectives like lancing polyps in the crud-coated walls of what looks like Satan's infected sinus passages, or sneaking around the earthy confines of a Black Lake lodge, Ethan walks a path of increasingly intense dread.

The story is an inconsistent mishmash of conspiracy theories and personal demons, the dialogue is hopelessly forced, and the final battle is extremely anticlimactic, but there are more than enough memorably twisted moments of genuine fright and bewilderment to keep any horror fan's eyes wide open through these ten warped hours of madness.

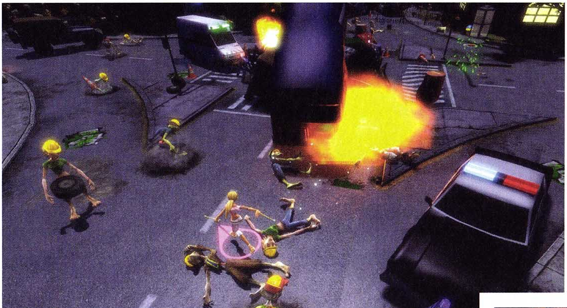
Cameron Lewis

★★★★

Online Evidence Tampering

Condemned 2's melee tilt gives eight-player team and free-for-all deathmatches an unfortunate plodding nature, and Bum Rush's timed onslaught is nothing special. Crime Scene mode fares better: serial killers hide and defend evidence that SCU operatives must find and scan. Unfortunately, the complete lack of voice chat is simply unpardonable.

Want to see busty, blonde Jennifer in a French maid or bikini costume? Unlock them by winning Challenges.



Cheerleader Jennifer clears out a street full of zombies with what look like elephant Q-tips. G-o J-e-n!

From aliens to pumpkin-headed Jacks, *Monster Madness* really is... mad with monsters.

Traversing an upwardly spiraling staircase while fending off undead minions of pure evil? Zack's dorkiest nerd-dream has come true!

Monster Madness: Grave Danger

A ghoulish jaunt through a suburban wasteland

PS3 PRICE: $39.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: SouthPeak Interactive DEVELOPER: Psyonix / Artificial Studios

Once upon a time, a game called *Monster Madness: Battle for Suburbia* was released for the PC and Xbox 360. The top-down horror-movie parody let you destroy armies of zombies, clowns, and even ghoulish versions of iconic figures like Bob Marley and...Barney? Though I personally never played it, word is that frustrating controls, a maddening camera, and limited online capability marred the game's offbeat concept.

Now, a game called *Monster Madness: Grave Danger* has been released for the PS3. It features the entire Adventure campaign of the earlier game—but with revamped controls, a better camera, improved online functionality, and a few exclusive extras. This one, I did play.

Grave Danger follows the story of four high school students whose hometown has been inexplicably overtaken by monsters. Though almost painfully stereotypical, the characters (jock, cheerleader, nerd, and goth) are portrayed with such gleeful indifference toward their own clichés and with such appealing comic-style art that the formula works. Instead of cringing, like I expected, I enjoyed the characters personalities *because* of their wanton banality.

As I traversed monster-infested suburban locales like malls and parks, I whacked (using rubber chickens, umbrellas, and samurai swords), shot (with a ranged arsenal my buddy, Larry the Truck Driver, crafted for me), or drove over (with one of the many vehicles in the game) all the witches, demonic school principals, fiery hobgoblins, and giant spiders I met. The controls were mostly fluid—move with the left analog stick, shoot with the right, and melee with the Circle button—though some of the vehicles were a headache to drive. Each level presented a new enemy, environment, or vehicle—truly a mishmash of mayhem.

But in spite of the variety, the overall experience became repetitive. Even with three friends playing with me (online or on the same system), the race-around-and-kill-waves-of-bad-guys mechanic staled, especially when I blindly had to trust arrows to guide me to objectives. A map of some sort would've helped, since I wanted to explore every corner of the detailed zones. And even though the enemies were creative visually, the actual gameplay was far less imaginative; for too many of the boss fights, it came down to shooting from a distance while avoiding attacks.

Overall, consider *Grave Danger* a guilty pleasure, enjoyable more for its tongue-in-cheek tone than for its actual gameplay. Teresa Dun

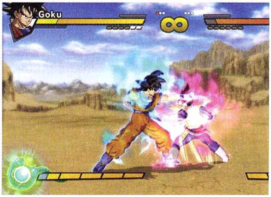
★★★

Multiplayer Madness

In addition to the online mode (which supports 16 players) and local Versus mode, the PS3 version offers 25 new mini-games called Challenges. While some are lackluster "shoot enemies as fast as you can" affairs, two favorites emerged from the pack: Zack-Man is a play on Pac-Man (grab the gems, dodge the enemies) and Zombie Dance-Off is a music rhythm game (the button prompts scroll in from four different directions instead of just one).

Prefer subs over dubs? You'll like the original Japanese soundtrack.

Trunks and Gohan tussle to determine who's got the spikiest hair.



Sure, *Burst Limit* may be visually impressive. Unfortunately, playing it is another story.

Dragon Ball Z:

Burst Limit

Scream loudly and save the world...again

PS3 PRICE: $59.95 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Atari/Namco Bandai DEVELOPER: Dimps

Whether it's a flurry using Piccolo's Gumbi-like arms, unleashing Goku's patented *Kamehameha,* or just plain walking forward, every character movement in *Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit* looks like it's been ripped straight from the anime series. Too bad its beauty is only skin deep. When you get right down to it, *Burst Limit* is a shallow fighter with little more to offer than a fistful of fan service for admirers of the series' trademark characters.

Watching Goku and company dash about as they smash each other silly looks epic, but because of all the fast-paced button-mashing, you never actually feel like you're in control of the action, making each round more like a drawn-out game of chance than skill.

Combos can be strung together with flurries of weak and strong attacks that'll send your opponent flying, but a well-timed push on the guard button or a quick sidestep can counter just about every move. Because of this, battles quickly devolve into a routine of spamming random attack buttons and switching over to the guard button whenever you see your enemy making a move.

But for *DBZ* fans, it's not a complete loss. *Burst Limit*'s Story mode somewhat makes up for its overly simple combat. All the major battles from Vegeta's first trip to Earth, Frieza's assault on Namek, and the Cell Games are present and accounted for. The joy of helping Goku give Vegeta a much-needed beatdown and stepping into the shoes of Cell to crush the friendly and philosophical Android 17 is hard to resist. (If you've got any idea what I'm talking about, then this game is probably worth at least a rental for you.)

As you slog through the Story mode, you'll also unlock new characters and battles. But unless you're intimately familiar with the *DBZ* canon, the barrage of memorable battles between major characters (like Cell and Gohan) and minor ones (like Yamcha and the Saibamen) won't impress. In fact, they might even confuse you, as the extremely brief cutscenes don't do anything except establish that two guys are about to fight. Since the Story mode is the most enjoyable part of the game, it's disappointing that you can finish these battles and unlock most of the characters in less than six hours.

Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit's gorgeous graphics really do mimic the anime. But once your eyes adjust to the razzle-dazzle, you find that the gameplay isn't nearly as pretty. Tyler Nagata

★★½

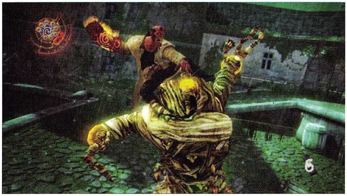
Delicious Names

Did you know that a lot of *Dragon Ball Z's* characters are named after types of food? Yamcha is a type of tea, Gohan means rice, and Vegeta is a derivative of vegetable, just to name a few.

Repeatedly tap X to counter the hard-to-read attacks of smaller guys like Gohan.

Goku's Roots

Son Goku was based off a Chinese mythological hero known in the West as the Monkey King. Like the anime action star, the Monkey King traveled on clouds, was handy with a bo stick, possessed incredible strength, and sported a furry tail.



Hellboy doesn't have to fight alone. A co-op mode lets you play through the story with a friend—online or splitscreen, with either Abe Sapien or Liz Sherman.

Hellboy:
The Science of Evil

A formula for frustration

PS2 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Konami DEVELOPER: Krome Studios

His fist may pack a sledgehammer punch, but I doubt that means Hellboy never needs to block or dodge. Yet in *The Science of Evil*, the demon Paranormal Investigator can't really do either. The game lacks block functionality, and the only form of dodge is a rather clumsy two-button command.

As I crossed graveyards, spooky villages, and Japanese gardens, I had over a half-dozen combos to choose from. Unfortunately, I rarely needed them. Henchmen could be defeated by mashing two buttons (Circle and Triangle), and boss battles all boiled down to the same strategy: press R2 at the right time. Either pick up an object (by pressing R2) and fling it at the boss or grab the boss once he's weak (by pressing R2) and fling him.

Sometimes, the game required me to "unlock" an area. This was a pain because the unlocking mechanics would arbitrarily change. First, I had to steal a torch from an enemy to light lanterns. Fine. But two zones later, the game stopped spawning the torch-wielding demons. How could I know that a random pillar, which looked like every other destructible pillar, contained fire bullets? (And wouldn't you know it—I picked up the bullets by pressing R2!) Other times, I could only progress by searching for a cracked wall and breaking it (an action initiated by pressing, you guessed it, R2).

Hellboy fans with a "glass full" mentality might garner some enjoyment out of the game: The voiceovers and dialogue are well done. For the rest of us, getting to the little bit of original story just isn't worth the hours of tedious combat, frustrating level design, and finger-numbing R2-spamming.

Teresa Dun

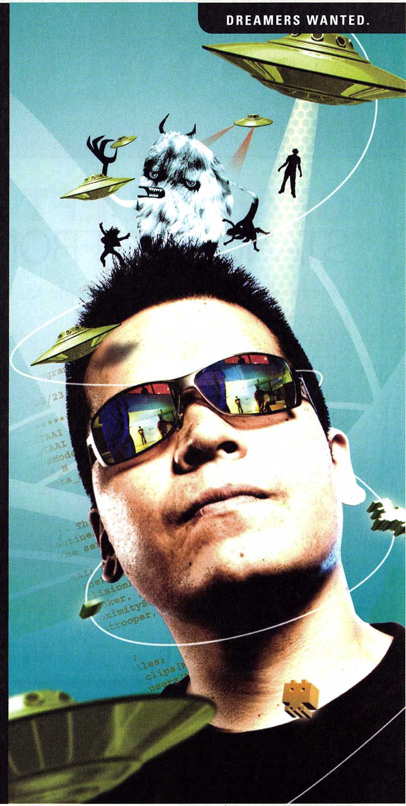
★★

Familiar characters populate *Hellboy: The Science of Evil,* which features a completely original storyline.

Ron Perlman, Selma Blair, and Doug Jones provided voices for the characters. Mike Mignola, the creator of *Hellboy*, and Guillermo del Toro, the film's director, provided creative direction.

DREAMERS WANTED.

DEGREES IN: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GRAPHIC DESIGN > MUSIC BUSINESS > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING



SCHOOL OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

800.226.7625 | 3300 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32792

Financial aid available to those who qualify • Career development assistance • Accredited School, ACCSCT

ONE OF THE TOP FIVE GAME-DEGREE PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD

– Electronic Gaming Monthly

FULL SAIL®
Real World Education

fullsail.com

© 2007 Full Sail Inc. All rights reserved.

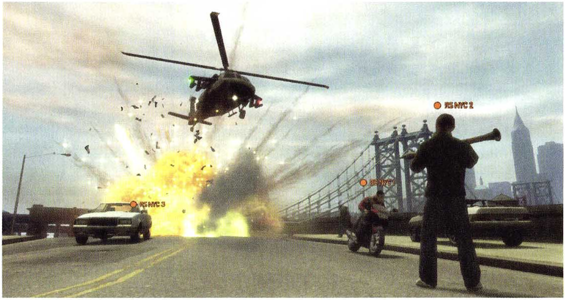
GRAND THEFT AUTO IV: STAND OUT FROM THE CROWDS

How to win friends and cap people for fame and profit

It didn't take long after *GTA IV* hit retail shelves for legions of players to dive online and discover that, well, they could actually go online and play some *GTA*. As a first go-around, Rockstar's latest delivered a spectacularly robust suite of game modes and options. In the early weeks after launch certain modes proved more popular than others, though it was always easy to find other players for Quick Matches for all game modes.

Combat does feel a little bit different from the single-player experience, which is largely down to lag issues you may experience. Like any fast-paced online game, unless your connection is super-smooth, expect to see cars or bodies instantly appearing and disappearing, among other anomalies.

But enough of the problems. Life is tough enough in Liberty City, so let's turn our attention instead to some general tips we've picked up in our play experience, along with some specific tactics for our favorite game modes:



In GTA Race mode, aim for a target's tires first. They're easier to hit than the driver. Or you could pull out the RPG and simply go to town. Each of the options is satisfying in their own particular way.

General Tips

Headshots: You know this from the single-player experience, but it's even more valuable here. If the party leader allows auto-aim in the game options, use it to get a bead and then aim high for the debilitating headshot.

Armor: Again, the rule of thumb from the single-player game—always, always, ALWAYS go for the armor before any mission—applies in multiplayer. If you don't see an enemy dot on the radar between you and the armor when you spawn in, make a beeline for it. In modes such as Cops and Crooks, if you're in a car, don't sweat bailing out to snag the armor, then jack your own ride and catch up on the chase.

Arm Yourself: The assault rifle and carbine are powerful, accurate, and can even chew through armor at a good rate if you keep a steady bead on your target. Find them on the map (their icons are fairly obvious) and jump in a car if needed to get yourself suitably armed and armored before entering combat.

No Boundaries: Although you may start your game in a set location, you're free to wander anywhere in the city. If you're near the location of, say, the attack helicopter, taking a detour out of the main arena is worth the time commitment for the shock and awe you'll unleash on all your targets when you come screaming into the zone.

Cover and Crouch: You get what appears in our playtesting to be a fairly significant boost to your accuracy if you fire from a crouched position. Crouching is also supposed to make your identifying dot disappear from the map, but really, we're unsure if that's always the case. Using cover just as in the single-player game provides terrific protection, and you can fire blind, but peeking out from crouched cover and aiming for the headshot is the best, safest, and most accurate method of executing an effective attack.

Respawn: Remember, particularly in the race modes, that if you get off track, miss a checkpoint, or take a complete wrong turn, you can right yourself by pressing and holding the Triangle button. Be decisive in making the decision to respawn early (say, as you're flying off the track and seemingly out of contention), that way you'll lose the least amount of time possible.

RS NYC 1
RS NYC 2
LIBERTY CITY

Level Up

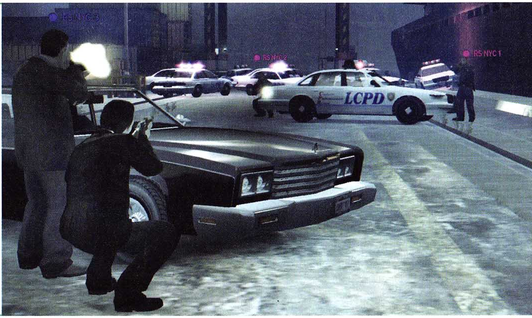
Improving your star level—aside from the straight-up respect factor—earns you additional outfits (torsos, hats, glasses, etc.) to help style up your character. Levels are earned by the amount of cash you get in each online match. Finishing in the top few places in a race (depending on the number of competitors) can earn you quite a chunk. A 12-player race winner, for example, can net well in excess of $1,000 for that victory. Considering that advancing from zero to one star requires $1,000, you can see that success pays.

In modes such as deathmatch, you earn $100 for every kill and your target will also drop money, so chasing down those extra glowing bundles of green is well worth the effort.

Cops 'n' Crooks

One team plays the cops, the other the boss and his hoods. One crook is randomly selected as the boss, and he must stay alive and get to the evacuation point safely. The cops jump in a car and go screaming through the city in hot pursuit. Fun times. For the cops, make sure you don't turn on the siren. It's just a big "we're coming" beacon to the bad guys.

As the crooks, remember nobody else matters aside from the boss. Teamwork is vital; if the cops get close, it's up to the supporting cast to keep them at bay. The police will be laser-focused on the boss, so getting in their way, even if it means putting your body on the line, is what's needed for team success.



Burger
LCPD

GTA Race

Sometimes a regular race (fun though they may be) can get out of hand and you find yourself off course, out of contention, and racing for nothing but pride. In the GTA Race, if that happens you've always got the weapons to fall back on. Though your chance of winning and earning the big bucks may be spoiled, you still get $100 for each takedown—and when your own chance at victory is shot, you may as well eke out some sick satisfaction at playing the spoiler and taking out the race leader. Hang in there, don't quit out, and earn yourself some dough with well-placed RPG shots!

NETWORK STRATEGY

GRAN TURISMO 5 PROLOGUE
ONLINE SURVIVAL GUIDE

As crew chief Harry Hogge advised in *Days of Thunder:* "He didn't slam you, he didn't bump you, he didn't nudge you...he *rubbed* you. And rubbin' son, is racin'." We welcome you to the world of *GT5 5 Prologue's* online racing with Roger's expert tips for success.

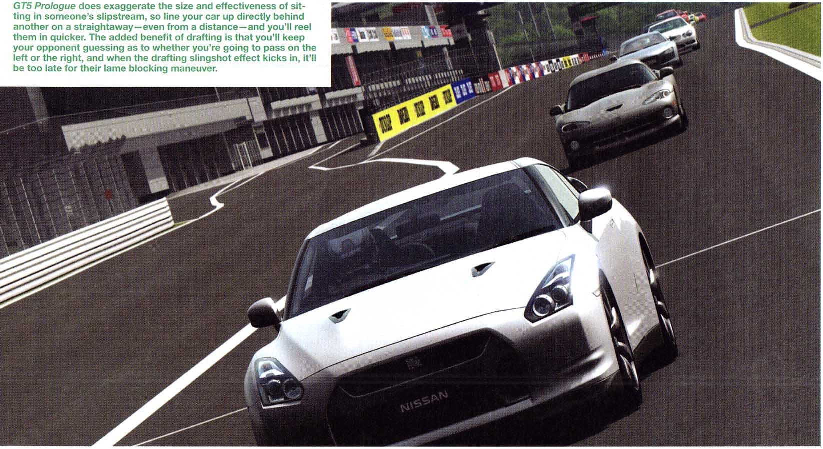
Even though *GT5 Prologue's* available rides pale in comparison to a full blown *Gran Turismo* game, it's still a challenge to explore the limits of all 71 cars. You'll want to maximize the bang for your credits as you progress through single-player events and venture online.

As part of the Class C, B, and A guantlet you'll need to master to gain full online access, you're required to purchase vehicles like the Suzuki Cappuccino, BMW M3, and Ferrari F40. You can sell these cars after mastering the vehicle-specific events, but the credits you recover from these transactions are so insultingly low, you might as well keep the car.

It's the rides for the other events where you need to be discerning and selective. A good car choice will keep you competitive for a number of events. Select the wrong car and a frustrating string of losses will slow your progress and the recovery of your credit balance.

Performance and versatility are the keys to a good-bang-for-the-buck purchase: The Honda Integra Type R '04, the Nissan R35 GT-R '07, the Chevrolet Corvette Z06 '06, and the Concept by Gran Turismo Lancer Evolution X/Tuned make for a formidable lineup that guarantees a favorable return on investment. There are sexier cars, but you'll be paying for style rather than substance.

Once you've fattened your bank roll with this lineup, aim to pick up an Amuse S2000 GTI Turbo and a Concept by Gran Turismo Ford GT LM Spec II Test Car. I'm using empirical rather than personal data for this suggestion as neither of these are in my garage yet, but these are the two cars that I'm most frequently chasing in my online battles. Also, pick up a Ferrari F2007 if you happen to have two million credits. Will it be worth it? I have no idea, but it's something you've *got* to do if you're a *Gran Turismo* fan, isn't it?


GT5 Prologue does exaggerate the size and effectiveness of sitting in someone's slipstream, so line your car up directly behind another on a straightaway—even from a distance—and you'll reel them in quicker. The added benefit of drafting is that you'll keep your opponent guessing as to whether you're going to pass on the left or the right, and when the drafting slingshot effect kicks in, it'll be too late for their lame blocking maneuver.

Quick Tune settings that directly affect the performance point rating generally include horsepower, weight, aerodynamics, and tire selection. The natural inclination is to run the highest horsepower possible, but if you're forced to compromise, give up some power in favor of the stickiest tires you can run. You'll miss the horsepower less than the ability to negotiate a turn.

Two unexpectedly disappointing rides to avoid are the Ford Mustang GT '07 and the Subaru Impreza WRX STI '07. The Mustang's no technical marvel, but I did expect more oomph from the V8 and I didn't expect it to handle like a river barge. Being a fan of All Wheel Drive cars, I had high hopes for the WRX STI, but compared to even the standard Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X, the Subie is an understeering pig.

Pre-Race Strategy

You may be inclined to try and build up your garage before heading online—that would be a mistake. Online beginner-level races award 12,000 credits for first place finishes. Since these races are short and usually populated by less-skilled racers, it's an easy way to pick up credits fast even if you only have a basic car.

Once you've familiarized yourself with beginner online play, head back to single-player events and buy the choicest rides to face the level challenges. You'll need to clear events through Level A in order to access online Intermediate, Expert, and Pro level races. You'll find your balance compounding quickly as Intermediate level victories pay 30,000 credits and Expert level pays 50,000.

Pro level races are time trials that allow you to track and compare your lap times against the Top 100 online performances. The cyber competition is fierce, and since I prefer racing opponents over shaving hundredths of a second off a lap, I can't confirm if there's a monetary award for cracking the Top 100. If you are one of the few, the proud, the Top 100, make sure to let us know how much you banked.

On Track Tactics

Online racing can be a wild, raucous, and frequently unpredictable experience (especially in the beginner races where there are no penalties for coming into contact with competitors or barriers.) You'll soon discover that the online experience is much more about racing other people than racing the track.

Whereas you might have focused on hitting the perfect line in the single-player game, the key to online victory is keenly observing the driving style and characteristics of other racers. A smooth driving style usually indicates a more experienced racer with a better skill set; you'll need to be focused and precise in your driving to chase someone like this down as they won't be making many mistakes. A more erratic driving style can indicate a less experienced driver, but this type of driver is dangerous as they often adopt a more aggressive and physical driving style to compensate for lackluster skills. Anticipate some rubbing when passing someone of this ilk.

It's a good idea to limit the rough stuff beginning with Intermediate level online races as the penalty system evidenced in Level S of the single-player mode is in effect. Suddenly, colliding with an opponent, hitting a barrier, or taking an off-track short cut will garner a four- to eight-second penalty. This cuts down on the destruction derby attitude of beginner level races, but that doesn't mean a little hard nose racing can't be advantageous.

In fact, if you're going to tag someone, make sure it's the most skilled racer and take him out *hard.* If you're lucky, you'll spin him so far off track that your eight-second penalty will be a mere fraction of his recovery time. Make sure to pull this stunt early in a race so that you can make up your own time deficit. Yes, it's super dirty, but you won't care when you're collecting your credits in the winners circle.

Another classic, albeit dirty, move: Brake hard when a pursuing car is right on your tail. If done deftly, the car behind you will incur a penalty for the collision while the force of the impact propels you forward at a higher velocity. Heh heh...sweet.

Gear ratios aren't part of Quick Tune's performance point rating calculation, but selecting the proper setup to match the characteristics of a track can make a huge difference. If the track you're running features long straightaways like Daytona Superspeedway, use a ratio that maximizes top speed (while retaining an adequate acceleration curve to reach that high speed). On a curvy road course like Suzuka, select gearing that will maximize acceleration over top speed.

» PLAY OFFLINE

HOW TO SURVIVE THE RPG DROUGHT

Our guide to real-world roleplaying

Peek at a list of promised features in just about any new PS3 release and you're bound to see one attribute touted over and over again: RPG-like (or -lite) elements. No matter if it's a World War II shooter or a European soccer sim, it seems like every developer is RPG crazy these days, espousing the ability to, say, improve your flexor digitorum superficialis (for enhanced pistol-packing prowess) or your left gracilis muscle (better to make that corner kick count).

And while that might make for a unique gameplay experience, we can't help but wonder: What happened to the true roleplaying game? What of the endless menus, linear stories, deliberate turn-based battles, and elaborate cutscenes? Where are our beloved PS3 RPGs?!

With so few RPGs on the PS3 (and even fewer for die-hard JRPG fans), we thought it time to take a break from playing games and turn to real-world outlets for our roleplaying fantasies. Forthwith, seven ways to occupy your time until the next big PS3 RPG release (FYI, that's *Fallout 3,* see pg. 20).

① Dungeons & Dragons

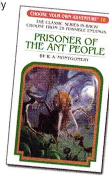
For some of us, this is where it all began: classic roleplaying with a fistful of dice, a ream of graph paper, and an ill-tempered dungeon master guiding us through the adventure of a lifetime (or perhaps the grandest adventure you can have with five guys sitting in a basement on a Saturday night). Long before videogames became the demon du jour, *D&D* was the original cause of fear and loathing among concerned parents; today, the classic roleplaying system still stands as an ever-evolving framework for imaginative meanderings through fantastic worlds. We'd like to make some snarky remark here—but truth be told, we're still fans of old-school tabletop gaming. Yeah, we admit it. And so should you. (Best yet: If you're a *D&D* first-timer, the new Fourth Edition rules should make it even easier to get into the game!)

② Cosplay

Dress up as your favorite character. Attend convention. Panic as sweaty fanboys and squeeing fangirls swarm you to take photos. (Or "glomp" you. Which can be good if you lack human contact when in less exotic settings.) Just remember: a store-bought costume won't cut it. You've got to sew your own if you want to ascend the ranks of cosplay society. And memo to first-time girls wearing skimpy outfits: have a male friend nearby who can play the boyfriend role. It's no fun spending the entire weekend at the local con fending off some creep who keeps offering to, er, introduce his dragon to your dungeon.

③ LARP

That's live-action roleplaying for the rest of us. And it's just the kind of madness that signals a true devotion to the cause of RPGs, a level of commitment that goes well beyond sitting around a Cheetos stained table or sewing some pleather wings onto your grandma's treasured smock. Become a vampire (or warlock or werewolf or…whatever!) in a game with thousands of players across the globe, and act the part (literally) in local group gatherings or through online chats and emails. With time and effort, you will become someone in the world of LARPing—someone really, really, really, truly, really, seriously, really, really nerdy.


CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE 10
THE CLASSIC SERIES IS BACK!
CHOOSE FROM 28 POSSIBLE ENDINGS.
PRISONER OF THE ANT PEOPLE
BY R. A. MONTGOMERY

④ Read

Whoa! Hang on! Before you turn the page in search of something a bit more interactive, we're not suggesting any old book. In fact, we're urging you to Choose Your Own Adventure—a long-running series of young-adult novels in which you're faced with a conundrum and you flip to the designated page to follow the path of your choices. A typical predicament, cribbed right from the series' site (www.cyoa.com): "What would you do if Flppto discovered some curious marks on an old tuna sandwich wrapper? Would you try to decipher the lines? Or would that seem too ridiculous to you?" There's only one way to find out, and that's by reading *Prisoner of the Ant People*…we dare ye.

⑤ Get Crafty

For the serious roleplayer, there's a wealth of off-line options for expressing your creativity. Perhaps you want to paint your Warhammer figures. Or maybe you'd like to build an origami army of angry orcs. And we can't forget LEGO—why not recreate a favorite moment from a classic RPG? So consider this a challenge: We want to see your creations! Send us a pic of your efforts (PTOM_letters@futureus.com), and we'll feature the best in an upcoming issue.

⑥ Attend a Renaissance Faire

Eat a giant turkey leg while sipping mead served to you by a comely wench. Better yet, go in character and you will enter a world where the meek become manly men and the hesitant become heaving hussies. In other words, you will know love.

⑦ Learn a New Language

Spanish, French, Japanese, Swahili? Boring! Klingon? Now you're talking, but still a bit passe. Why not pick a language from a beloved RPG? Try Al Bhed, for example: Ev oui lyh nayt drec fedruid luhcimdehk cusa cund uv VYX un bnesan, oui yna uvveleymmo dra hanteacd bancuh eh dra ahdena ihejanca. Luum!

Interested in LARPing? Check out http://camarilla.white-wolf.com for information on how to get started in a local game.

What it lacked in substance, *Okage: Shadow King* made up for in style.

Reach level 9999 with every *Disgaea* character and you'll actually become Laharl and crew!

Quick: Who's your favorite *FFX* character to cosplay as? No, you can't pick them all...

Lunar: Silver Star Story

Gary's Top 5
PSone RPGs

Final Fantasy IX
FFVII might be the obvious choice—and it's certainly the most important RPG of the modern era—but *FFIX* tops my chart because of the lovable cast of characters (including my all-time favorite, Vivi) along with the most balanced gameplay in the series.

Vandal Hearts
Surprised? Then you missed out on a strategy gem. It was short and somewhat limited in its character development, but the battles were fantastically fun. Plus, those cartoony blood spatters when you offed a foe? Magnificent. Just make sure you track down the first one; the sequel kinda blew.

Final Fantasy Tactics
No doubt this should be on the PSP list, since that version has the better translation. But to this day, *FFT* on the PSone remains the *only* game I've ever played for more than 100 hours—and I loved every single freakin' minute of this strategy roleplaying masterpiece.

Lunar: Silver Star Story
This remake of a 16-bit classic had one of the best-translated scripts ever. I literally made it a point to talk to everyone twice to see what they'd say next. Plus, the battle system added some nifty strategic twists to the classic turn-based setup. Super fun!

Suikoden II
Gotta love a game where you can recruit 108 different characters—many of which are playable, all of who help you build your castle. Half the fun comes from uncovering all the combos you could unleash by swapping in different six-character parties!

Final Fantasy X

Gary's Top 5
PS2 RPGs

Final Fantasy X
Not just the the best battle system, but also the best character development system in a traditional RPG, period. I love the Sphere Grid. I plan to marry the Sphere Grid and call it Mrs. Sphere Grid Steinman. I love it that much.

Final Fantasy X-2
What an amazing sequel. A completely different feel to the world and the gameplay, yet altogether familiar for anyone who loved its predecessor. Zippy battles with constant costume changes in order to change your job and skills—a fanboy's ultimate fantasy.

Dark Cloud 2
Living up to the unfulfilled promise of the first game, *Dark Cloud 2* combined so many different elements—world-building, dungeon-crawling, puzzle-solving, fishing, golf!—into one brilliantly beautiful experience. The game is just so darn big.

Kingdom Hearts
Disney and Square in one game, with Final Fantasy cameos aplenty. It shouldn't have worked, but it worked so astoundingly well that it made classic Disney characters cool again. My thumbs still twitch when I think about that battle with Sephiroth in the Coliseum.

Shadow Hearts
This one came out of nowhere and became a sleeper hit among RPG aficionados. A horror setting with wickedly funny moments and some bizarre monsters and characters—along with a really novel way to incorporate timed button-presses in a turn-based battle system.

Jeanne D'Arc

Teresa's Top 5
PSP RPGs

Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII
Maybe I'm just an oddball, but checking off items in a To Do list makes me happy. Each mission in *CC* took me only a few minutes, and then it had a little checkmark by it! That, and the awesome story make *CC* one of my favorite PSP RPGs.

Jeanne D'Arc
What attracted me to this half historical, half fantastical strategy RPG was the clever blend of story, character development, solid tactical gameplay, and ease of entry. Oh, and the transformations. Chain-killing enemy after enemy while transformed was such a power trip.

Puzzle Quest
Adding an RPG twist to a casual game like *Bejeweled* shouldn't make you lose sleep. But the different skill combos, enemy variety, and randomness factor made *Puzzle Quest* so addictive that I even started dreaming about gem swapping in my sleep.

Disgaea: Afternoon of Darkness
Being evil never felt as delicious as when I was chucking exploding Prinnies at ghouls or bribing senators in the Dark Assembly. With literally (almost) endless depth, this PSP remake of a classic strategy RPG is *still* keeping me busy. Must...get...level...9999. Again.

Final Fantasy
On its own merits, the original *Final Fantasy* is definitely dated. But as a history lesson into one of my favorite PlayStation franchises, I found this remake simply invaluable. I enjoy seeing the budding beginnings of what later evolved into the series' trademark job and magic systems.

POP QUIZ

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION TRIVIA

Test your skills, win a prize (or not)

Sure, you dress like Solid Snake and sneak out of work by hiding beneath a cardboard box, but how well do you really know the *Metal Gear* series? First, answer our 51 trivia questions, then check your answers on page 96 to find out which rank best describes your knowledge of Tactical Espionage Action.

① What was the name of Solid Snake's mission in the original *Metal Gear?*
- A. Intrude N312
- B. Intrude N313
- C. Virtuous Mission
- D. One Man Infiltration

② What is the name of the FOX-HOUND member whom Snake is in charge of rescuing in *Metal Gear?*
- A. Big Boss
- B. Schneider
- C. Gray Fox
- D. Otacon

③ In *Metal Gear,* who is the terrorist in control of Outer Heaven?
- A. Big Boss
- B. Schneider
- C. Gray Fox
- D. Diane

④ Which operative tells Snake the location of items in *Metal Gear?*
- A. Big Boss
- B. Schneider
- C. Jennifer
- D. Ellen

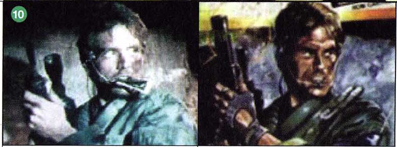
⑤ What year was *Metal Gear* released on the MSX2 home computer system?
- A. 1985
- B. 1986
- C. 1987
- D. 1988

⑥ What year was *Metal Gear* released on the NES in the United States?
- A. 1985
- B. 1986
- C. 1987
- D. 1988

⑦ What weapon does Snake start with at the beginning of *Metal Gear?*
- A. He is unarmed
- B. Knife
- C. Beretta
- D. None of the above

⑧ In *Metal Gear,* which terrorist runs Outer Heaven's underground prison?
- A. Big Boss
- B. Shoot Gunner
- C. Fire Trooper
- D. Arnold

⑨ During what year did *Metal Gear's* storyline take place?
- A. 1993
- B. 1994
- C. 1995
- D. 1996



⑩ The actor shown in the picture above provided the inspiration for *Metal Gear's* box art. Who is this actor?

⑪ During what year did *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake's* storyline take place?
- A. 1999
- B. 1998
- C. 1997
- D. 1996

⑫ Who wore the stealth camo in *Metal Gear 2?*
- A. Big Boss
- B. Schneider
- C. OILIX
- D. Gray Fox

⑬ Who was Snake's anonymous "fan" in *Metal Gear 2?*
- A. Big Boss
- B. Schneider
- C. Gray Fox
- D. Roy Campbell

⑭ Who is FOXHOUND's commander in *Metal Gear 2?*
- A. Big Boss
- B. Roy Campbell
- C. Solid Snake
- D. Naked Snake

⑮ What was the frequency of one of Snake's female colleagues in *Metal Gear 2?*
- A. 140.25
- B. 140.15
- C. 140.85
- D. 140.16

⑯ How many Alert levels were used in *Metal Gear Solid 2?*
- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

⑰ True or False: Schneider defected to the terrorist organization in *Metal Gear 2.*
T F

⑱ To defeat the Hind D in *Metal Gear 2,* use _________ missiles.

⑲ True or False: An oxygen bar was one of *Metal Gear 2's* gameplay additions.
T F

⑳ True or False: Snake retires at the end of *Metal Gear 2.*
T F

㉑ Who was Snake's primary antagonist in *Metal Gear Solid?*
A. Revolver Ocelot
B. Liquid Snake
C. Naked Snake
D. Solidus Snake

㉒ True or False: During *Metal Gear Solid,* Donald Anderson died in a prison cell.
T F

㉓ Which character amputated Revolver Ocelot's arm?
A. Solid Snake
B. Meryl
C. Decoy Octopus
D. Ninja

㉔ Who was the Ninja in *Metal Gear Solid?*

㉕ What was Psycho Mantis' weakness?
A. Headshots
B. Explosives
C. Controller port 2
D. Controller port 1

㉖ In *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes,* a _________ console can be found on a desk in Otacon's area.

㉗ Which character gave Snake the FOXDIE virus?
A. Roy Campbell
B. Gray Fox
C. Naomi
D. Meryl

㉘ _________ was the island on which *Metal Gear Solid* was set.

㉙ *Metal Gear 2* was set how many years after *Metal Gear Solid?*
A. 5
B. 6
C. 7
D. 8

㉚ To defeat the Hind D in *Metal Gear Solid,* use _________ missiles.

㉛ Who wears the ninja costume in *Metal Gear Solid 2?*
A. Gray Fox
B. Liquid Snake
C. Olga Gurlukovich
D. Revolver Ocelot

㉜ Whose arm did Ocelot steal to replace the one he lost in *Metal Gear Solid?*
A. Solid Snake's
B. Liquid Snake's
C. Otacon's
D. Raiden's

㉝ "E.E." stands for _________ Emmerich.

㉞ True or False: Roy Campbell was Raiden's commander.
T F

㉟ Which member of Dead Cell is obsessed with bombs?
A. Fatman
B. Vamp
C. Solidus Snake
D. Fortune

㊱ On what day did Raiden meet his girlfriend, Rose?
A. April 30
B. March 30
C. May 30
D. June 30

㊲ Who kills Olga Gurlukovich?
A. Solid Snake
B. Raiden
C. Revolver Ocelot
D. Solidus Snake

㊳ Match the *Metal Gears.* Write the letter of each *Metal Gear* seen in the collage (right) next to the Metal Gear game in which it appeared.
Metal Gear:
Metal Gear 2:
Metal Gear Solid:
Metal Gear Solid 2:
Metal Gear Solid 3:

㊴ How many members comprise the Patriots group in *Metal Gear Solid 2?*
A. 10
B. 11
C. 12
D. 13

㊵ _________ voiced Solid Snake in *Metal Gear Solid 2.*

㊶ What is the name of the scientist Snake is charged with rescuing in *Metal Gear Solid 3?*
A. Otacon
B. Sokolov
C. Hal Emmerich
D. Dr. Drago Pettrovich Madnar

㊷ What was the name of Snake's mission in *Metal Gear Solid 3?*
A. Intrude N312
B. Intrude N313
C. Virtuous Mission
D. None of the Above

㊸ True or False: Eating food increased stamina in *Metal Gear Solid 3.*
T F

㊹ What was Snake's codename in *Metal Gear Solid 3?*
A. Solid Snake
B. Naked Snake
C. Solidus Snake
D. Big Boss

㊺ The Philosophers comprise the most powerful men in the Soviet Union, China, and _________.

㊻ True or False: In *Metal Gear Solid 3,* wounds had to be treated following a specific list of steps in order to be properly cured.
T F

㊼ Who is the President of the United States during *Snake Eater's* storyline?
A. Lyndon Johnson
B. Dwight Eisenhower
C. John F. Kennedy
D. Richard Nixon

㊽ Which terrorist used bees to attack?
A. Colonel Volgin
B. Revolver Ocelot
C. The End
D. The Pain

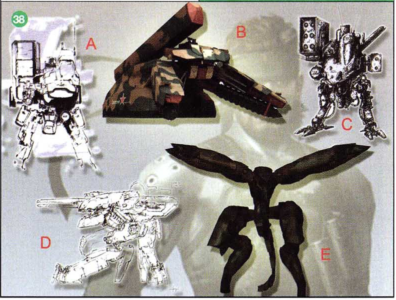
㊾ At the end of *Snake Eater,* Naked Snake earns the title of _________.

㊿ True or False: Eva was revealed to be a spy for Russia at the end of *Snake Eater.*
T F

(51) *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops* is a sequel to which game?
A. *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake*
B. *Snake's Revenge*
C. *Metal Gear Solid 2*
D. *Metal Gear Solid 3*

RANKINGS

1–10 CORRECT: Raiden
11–20: Naked Snake
21–30: Otacon
31–40: The Boss
41–50: Solid Snake
51: Big Boss



PlayStation Network Games

Downloadable games and add-ons for less than the price of an M.C. Escher poster. We say Yea or Nay.

+ YEA You'll get full value for your money.

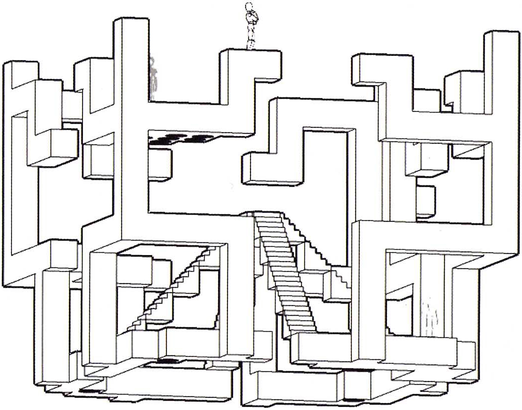
- NAY No legs, no fun, no value.

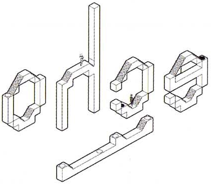
echochrome

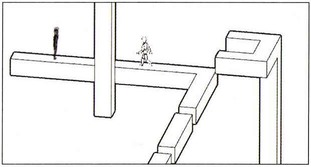
PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** SCE Japan Studio

+ Let the pundits ponder the grand question of whether games are art. We here at PTOM are tasked with a much simpler mandate: to determine if a game is fun and worth your investment. The answer, for *echochrome*, is yes. An exceedingly simple gameplay concept—twirl the level around to get your avatar from point A to B (to C, D, and so forth) along an obstacle-strewn platform—is in practice a masochistic trek through surreal terrain. Can you figure out how to make that gap disappear, or how to get those two levels to merge and connect, or how to position that hole so it drops you to the proper point? Perception is reality in *echochrome*, but finding the right perspective can be hellish indeed. The occasional fits of impossible difficulty, however, are balanced by the elation of those "Ah hah!" moments when you finally eke out a path to success. A mindtripping game that might indeed be art, *echochrome* is by any definition exceedingly addictive. We can't wait to see some of the better fan-created levels to emerge from the included editor tool!

Gary Steinman







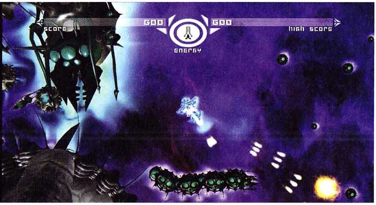
Coming Soon

PowerUp Forever

AVAILABLE: Fall

DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai

Essentially a mix of *flOw* (evolving critters) and *Everyday Shooter* (move with one analog stick, shoot with another), *PowerUp Forever* has two unique elements that should set it apart from the pack: a procedurally-drawn open environment (no boundaries at all!) and a creature that will grow in size as you play. See that planet-sized object next to you? It's sleeping. When you grow big enough to be a threat, it'll wake up and hunt you.

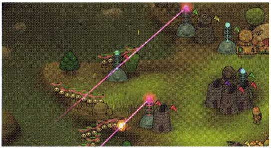


Wolf of the Battlefield: Commando 3

PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** Backbone Entertainment

Remember playing shooters in arcades? They were tough—purposely so, in order to milk quarters from bored teenagers. *Wolf of the Battlefield: Commando 3* mimics the spirit of those '80s classics by being just as brutal (though much prettier). You fly through five stages with up to two others (online or on the same console), but here's the catch: You can't save between levels. Instead, you have to beat all five stages at once. Oh, and you can't earn extra lives. Besides those bits of cruelty, the gameplay is simple: Move with your left analog, and shoot enemies that swarm from all corners of the screen with your right. The simple pick-up-and-play mechanics are perfect for fans classic coin-op shooters.

Teresa Dun



PixelJunk Monsters Encore

PRICE: $4.99 **DEVELOPER:** Q-Games

My encounter with *PixelJunk Monsters Encore*—the expansion of *PJM*—is like when my best grade school friend came home from summer camp one year with a tattoo and a nose ring...and I was still collecting stickers (scratch 'n' sniffs were the best!). I thought I knew *PJM*. I thought the game and I had a transcendental connection (where I win and it submits to me). But *PJM Encore* had to come along and ruin the illusion...the game *schooled* me. So of course, I had to prove that I was up to the challenge by learning new tactics (though some levels still took me around 30 to 40 tries to rainbow). Fans who've unlocked the Hard area of the first *PJM* (and you need the original *PJM* in order to play *Encore*) will dig *Encore*—its Easy area is about the same difficulty as the later Medium *PJM* stages. But *PJM* newbies may find *Encore* a touch too difficult. On the new *Encore* island of Toki, you'll have to regain all power-ups (like the running skill), but if you're thirsting for more *PJM* levels, you can't skip *PJM Encore*, especially at its deliciously low $4.99 price.

Teresa Dun

1942: Joint Strike

PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** Backbone Entertainment

Fans of the '80s arcade *194x* series might immediately recognize the revamped top-down vertical shooter *1942: Joint Strike*. (Rob did. He jumped out of his chair and start squealing in delight when he saw me playing the game.) Even with completely overhauled graphics—all those enemy jets, tanks, and ocean liners are now in 3D—the game is reminiscent of its predecessors. Gunfire comes from every direction (sometimes in insane patterns that you can't dodge unless you've studied and memorized them,) and even though the graphics appear to be on different planes, the gameplay is still fully 2D. You'll be able to shoot ground and air units with the same stream of fire. With five stages that you can play with a partner (online or off) and competitive leaderboards, *1942* offers plenty of content for your 10 bucks.

Teresa Dun

flOw for PSP

PRICE: $7.99 **DEVELOPER:** SuperVillain Studios / thatgamecompany

Survival of the fittest: Eat or be eaten. Darwin's brutal law has never been portrayed so elegantly. Like the PS3 version of *flOw*, in this PSP download you control one of five different organisms. As you guide them through deeper and deeper levels of what's ostensibly the ocean, they eat smaller organisms, battle bigger ones, and evolve into stronger and more beautiful creatures. Each of the organisms has a different way to absorb other creatures along with a different special ability—the Snake you start with has a sprint-like skill while the Rogue you unlock later in the game can sneak around and paralyze enemies. The gameplay is relaxing, with a soundtrack that lulls you into a trance that's soothing but never dull. The only warning we have is this: If you don't have a PSP slim, using the old PSP's jerky analog nub to control your organism *will* cause your left thumb to cramp.

Teresa Dun

WHAT'S IN STORE

Our favorite updates and downloads from the PlayStation Store this month.

THE PLAYSTATION STORE REDESIGN

No longer does pressing the Circle (a.k.a. Cancel) button prompt us to quit the store when all we wanted to do was go back a page. No longer do we have to navigate with our analog sticks. No longer do we need to endure multiple slow-loading pages just to browse. Though some items are still tough to locate, the redesigned store is sleeker, faster, and more intuitive. We love it!

LAIR – DRAGONS AND CONTROL PACK FREE ADD-ON

For those of you who never got into *Lair* because the motion-sensor control scheme was too unfriendly, this latest add-on might be enough to get you to dust off the game or even go rent a copy. The add-on incorporates analog control, crosshairs, and rumble into your flights (not to mention two new dragons) as you soar and battle over beautiful terrain. It's rare for a patch to make us want to re-evaluate a game, but this one makes *Lair* worth a second look.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3 MAP PACK FREE ADD-ON

As if user-created maps weren't enough, Epic Games has released an official map pack for the appealing price of—free! You get three maps, including the small indoor Morbias (for Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, and Duel modes) and Searchlight (Capture the Flag). But our top pick has to be the familiar fan favorite, Facing Worlds!

Letters

Feedback, Insight, Bad Grammar, and One Angry Canadian

"Usually it's like this: I read your reviews...New *Sonic* game. It sucks. Ho Hum. I could have told you that by looking at the picture." >>

CANADIAN QUESTION FROM A READER EMAIL WE WON'T BE RUNNING

"Is it because I'm Canadian, eh?"

READY TO TILT

So I'm a little disappointed in videogames lately. I've been with them since the Atari so as everything moves toward photorealism, I long for colorful worlds that look "videogamey." There are high points (*Twisted Metal*, *Devil May Cry 4*, *GTA4*) but usually it's like this: I read your reviews... New *Sonic* game. It sucks. Ho Hum. I could have told you that by looking at the picture. There's no platforms or loops or rings and it's in 3D. (3D isn't always best, just ask *Castlevania*.) If I can see it, why can't Sega?

But next to it is *Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection!* Now I'm stoked! I have the *Gottlieb Collection* for PS2 and PSP. I think it is the best game on PSP (especially now that I've solved *Astonishia Story*). And I have an X-Arcade joystick rewired to make the side "flipper" buttons work on *PHOF* for PS2. So I went to Target, Wal-mart, Kmart, Circuit City, and even Gamestop—and guess what? Not only was the game not in stock, but they had no intentions of carrying it! They all asked the same question: "Don't you shop online?" Yes I do, but isn't that beside the point that I'm trying to shop locally and trying to get the game tonight and you're doing nothing but driving me to eBay and Amazon? I can see why developers/publishers must hate this situation. I guess it just strikes me as ironic that when I finally do get excited about a new game, no place even has it. I'll bet if it were a first-person shooter filled with exquisite colors like brown and gray, they'd have more copies than they could ever sell.

John E Brown II, Cheyenne, WY

You're not alone in your love of little silver balls. Our fearless leader, Robert Jebediah Overman Smith (those Brits always have several fancy middle names, don't they?) wasted away much of his youth in dingy arcades, feeding the tables with quarters (or was it tuppence?) while keeping one eye on his army of orphaned thieves that he sent out on "errands" throughout the soot-stained alleyways of London. Unfortunately, retro releases and nostalgia collections have a limited appeal in the marketplace, which is why you might have a tough time finding some of the stuff you love so dearly. One hope: With more and more games being created for and released on PSN every week, we're sure you'll start seeing some DLC that suits your tastes.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

On page 12 of issue number 006, May 2008, there was a vocabulary error in the section titled "Does Size Matter?" You used the phrase "the old adage." This is a redundancy. An adage is always old. The exact definition is

LETTER OF THE MONTH

GT5 Epilogue

Gran Turismo 5 Prologue prompted me to invent a new word: impressappointed. I never knew these two feelings could exist so closely until yesterday. Don't get me wrong, I think the game looks amazing and I don't think anyone would argue that the physics aren't by far the best ever in any game. While watching the opening cinema I was literally chuckling, in awe of the production values of this game. However, when I began my first race I immediately noticed some framerate issues accompanied by minor sound inconsistencies. Then I entered an online event and was horrified at the lag and lack of voice chat. I mean, really, is there any question that in-game voice chat support should be included in every game. (Although it's possible that I was just the only person in the room with a headset.) Moving on. I know that this is a new era of gaming and I can only hope that some or all of these issues will be resolved in a future update, but I'm still shocked at the huge graphical difference between the opening movie and the actual gameplay. All told, I'm more than happy to donate my $39.99 to Polyphony in order to help fund the development of the final version of *GT5*. I just hope it comes sooner than later because *GRID* just popped up on my grid, if you catch my drift.

Will *GRID* leave *Gran Turismo* in the dust? Or will *GT5* have what it takes to run all contenders off the road?

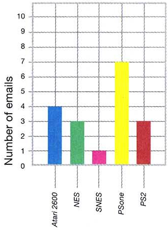
Gregory Hommel, Indianapolis, IN

Thanks for the letter, Gregory—or should we say "Roger Burchill"? Seems like our crack Managing Editor isn't alone in his mostly positive yet somewhat mixed feelings toward *GT5 Prologue*. Yes, it might be the best racer on the system, but it's just not...complete? Still, we can't stop playing it, so it must be doing something right. And yes, we catch your drift. We're also very excited for *GRID*. If it lives up to its promise, it should fix a lot of the issues Roger has with the latest *Gran Turismo*. Then again, the full release of *GT5* might do that as well...

Bona Fides

We get tons of letters from gamers eager to establish their harcore cred by mentioning the first system they owned. Which classic console takes the top spot in this month's mailbag?

First console



"an old saying that has come to be accepted as true." Saying "the old adage" is the same as saying "the hot fire." Fire is always hot, you don't get cold fire; an adage is always old, you don't get a new adage. I hope that you remember not to use such maladroit phrases from now on or I will have to scrutinize you again.
Sam Clark, via email

Scrutinize away, young whelp, because Gary is securely confident in his properly correct usage of the phrase "old adage." In fact, first recorded instance of the word *adage* appeared as part of the phrase "old adage," according to *The American Heritage Book of English Usage*. So redundant or not, it's a perfectly acceptable, even preferable, turn of phrase. (Gary would also like to point out that there is indeed such a thing as cold fire, something that any junior practitioner of the arcane arts would know. So, minus-5 from your nerd cred.)

Pop that collar, Kazuma! You need to look your best for your big comeback this September in *Yakuza 2*.

WHITHER *YAKUZA*?

I'm a longtime subscriber and I have a couple of questions. A while ago an announcement had been made about *Yakuza 2* coming to the US, but the date is still TBA. Do you have any inside knowledge as to when this game will be available?

Secondly, any news from Team ICO and what they've been working on—and if yes, when it will become available?
Ilia Moldavski, via email

Inside info? We'll do you one better! We've seen the U.S. version of *Yakuza 2* in action, and we're pleased to report that it looks fabulous and is shaping up to be even more brutally fun than the first. Get ready to play it this September. As for Team Ico's current project, the latest scuttlebutt suggests that they're working on two games—one connected to *Ico*, the other to *Shadow of the Colossus*. We're hoping to hear more in the next few months, but for now, this enticing rumor is all we've got.

ASK KRATOS

Will there be another *EverQuest* game on PS3?
Bob Courts, Grimes, Iowa

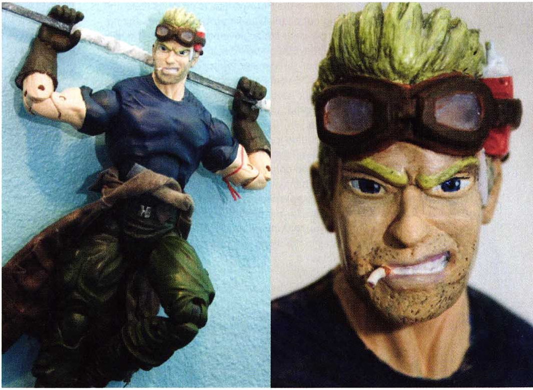
Ten years I have faithfully served the gods, and you ask me THIS question? When will I be spared the NIGHTMARE of this MADNESS?! I shall send you BACK to the depths Hades! Now there is NO hope for either of us! Iowa shall be your grave!! Oh, and the answer is yes.

Next-gen	Last-gen
GAMES ARE FUN	GAMES ARE ART
CHIMPS	MONKEYS
DC HEROES	MARVEL HEROES
SOVIET SOLDIERS	ISLAMIC MILITANTS
RUMBLE	RUMBLE

Go Figure

A lot of the *Final Fantasy* characters are getting their own toy but I (and many others) wonder why Cid hasn't had a figure yet. Throughout the *Final Fantasy* games, there's always been a character named Cid. They should have at least designed one figure after one of the Cids. I choose Cid from *Final Fantasy VII Advent Children* because not only was that my fave *Final Fantasy* game, but Cid was also a fun character. His cocky attitude mixed in with his knowledge and love for machinery made him a likable and memorable. So with all that said, I hope you like my tribute to Cid Highwind. Without him, it would be hell traveling on foot throughout Gaia!

The face and hair was free-sculpted with Apoxie and Super Sculpey. This was my first time working with Super Sculpey. I used the boiling method to cook the clay. The goggle lens were pieces of plastic that I cut from the plastic packaging that comes with the toys. Everything was hand-painted. There were no swivel points in the forearms so I had to make my own. I had to sculpt most of the left leg since I took off the sidearms. The coat came from a random 12-inch figure in my fodder box; I just had to dye it brown. The spear was made from some plastic thing I had lying around. I had to cut it up and piece it together.
Michael Amos, Oxnard, CA



contact i Send your thoughts and comments about the magazine to PTOM_letters@futureus.com. Tell us you love us. Or hate us. Just say something, because without you we'd wither and crumble. We need you so.

PlayStation POV

Partners in gaming

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, WE WILL BE but a few short weeks away from the launch of what is undeniably one of the biggest games to ship on PlayStation 3 in 2008—*Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*—a title synonymous with the PlayStation brand and indicative of the type of exclusive content that we strive to deliver on our platforms.

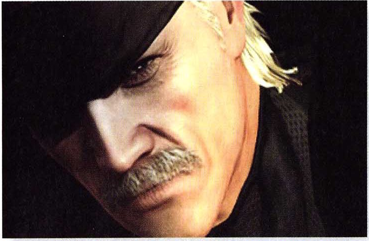
Hi everyone, my name is Rob Dyer and I am SCEA's new Senior Vice President of Publisher Relations. What this means is that I am accountable for overseeing all third-party titles developed for all PlayStation platforms. In my many years in the videogame industry, I have worked on all sides—development, publishing, retail, distribution—you name it, and I've probably done it! As a result, I am very aware of the challenges facing third-party developers and publishers as they look to us to help them create products that are successful on our platforms. My charter at SCEA is to make certain that our group encourages, supports, and acquires quality third-party content from developers and publishers, with the goal of having the best third-party titles find their way exclusively to PlayStation 3, PlayStation Portable, PS2, and the PlayStation Network.

This support can manifest itself in many ways, from marketing dollars or on-site support of development to the direct funding of game development. We are always looking for the next great game to come from the community, whether it is a potential PS3 blockbuster or a great new idea from an indie developer that would be a perfect fit for PSN. We are also making sure that we are out in the development community—giving game producers the tools they need to get the most out of our platforms. We are the first ones to admit that developing a game like *MGS4,* one that fully takes advantage of the mind-blowing power of PS3 and the near full 50GB capacity of the Blu-ray disc, is no small task, and we have been steadily rolling out middleware improvements and adding engineering support to help our partners achieve both the highest quality product and profitability. The PlayStation brand is in the unique position of having had great success in all three major territories (North America, Europe, and Japan) for close to 15 years and with that success comes the responsibility of supplying our consumers with a continuous stream of content for multiple platforms that we expect to have large, active user bases for 10 years or more.

Obviously, we don't do it alone! In a couple of weeks, as you find yourself embroiled in Mr. Kojima's latest masterpiece, you might take a short break from your CODEC and consider just how much time, talent, and effort went into making the highest quality experience possible—and one that could only be accomplished on PlayStation 3. It takes committed, empowered partners for our platforms to reach their full potential, and I can promise you that my group will be working tirelessly to ensure that the best games in the world, big or small, are built for the PlayStation family of products.

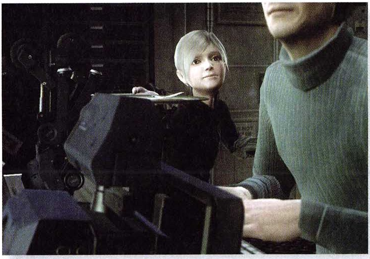
Rob Dyer is SCEA's new Senior Vice President of Publisher Relations.

Kids, don't smoke. Really, it makes you cough a lot and you'll look old. Ask Snake!



Looking at you. Looking at me. Looking at the future of PS3...is that a *haiku?*

> "Developing a game like *MGS4,* one that fully takes advantage of the mind-blowing power of PS3 and the near full 50GB capacity of the Blu-ray disc, is no small task."



"Dr. Emmerich? What are the answers to the *Metal Gear* quiz on pg. 90?"

Answers to MGS Quiz on p. 90

1. b 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. c 6. d 7. a 8. b 9. c 10. Michael Biehn 11. a 12. d 13. c 14. b 15. b 16. c 17. T 18. Stinger 19. T 20. T 21. b 22. F 23. D 24. Gray Fox 25. C 26. GameCube 27. c 28. Shadow Moses 29. b 30. Stinger 31. c 32. b 33. Emma 34. F 35. a 36. a 37. d 38. A = Tx-55; B = Shagohod; C = Metal Gear D; D = REX; E = RAY 39. c 40. David Hayter 41. b 42. c 43. T 44. b 45. America 46. T 47. a 48. d 49. Big Boss 50. F 51. D

Next month

In PlayStation: The Official Magazine

LittleBigPlanet will conquer the world. Really.

Plus, we're going in-depth and hands-on with ***Mortal Kombat vs. DC,*** getting word from series creator Ed Boon himself. And—cue the music—***Bond*** is back on PlayStation. New franchise owner Activision unveils the latest game installment.

In reviews, we check out ***Haze, SingStar PS3,*** and more.

GamesRadar.com Top 7...

Bad guys you didn't want to kill

The gaming murders that left a bad taste in our mouths

The Colossi

Shadow of the Colossus

Most of these huge beasts are just minding their own business and only attack once provoked. Colossus 13 doesn't even retaliate, instead merely attempting to shake you off. They clearly feel pain too - stab them in the head and you'll know about it. Come on, one of them's even got a cool beard, yet you still killed it, didn't you? It's dead now. You did it. Shame on you.

Wanna read more?

- Stereotypical gamers we hate
- Gaming nudity you didn't notice
- Secret shame games

Head to:
gamesradar.com/top7

Goombas

Super Mario Bros.

If you stand still and they hit you, you die, but then that's true of buses and you don't go around stamping on them. You only get 100 points per kill too - the gaming equivalent of a $5.00 whole chicken. Has life really become so discounted?

GLaDOS

Portal

Just as hostages can come to bond with their captors, so you end up liking GLaDOS - the female-voiced computer in Portal, the Best Game Ever Made (TM). Guilt for killing her is prolonged because you have to do it a piece at a time. While she talks to you. (Sniff.)

Orbinaut

Sonic the Hedgehog

After these critters toss their spikes they're just cute, marshmallowy-looking creatures that just stare and slowly move forwards. They're now totally harmless. Are you really such a bastard that you'd kill them? Yep, us too. But we felt dirty afterwards.

Big Daddies

BioShock

They're huge, ugly, armed with a massive drill and turn violent with only the smallest provocation, but the Big Daddies still make us sad when they die. They're only protecting their Little Sister after all. 'Wake up, Mr Bubbles?' Sorry, ain't gonna happen.

Spotty Bulorb

Pikmin

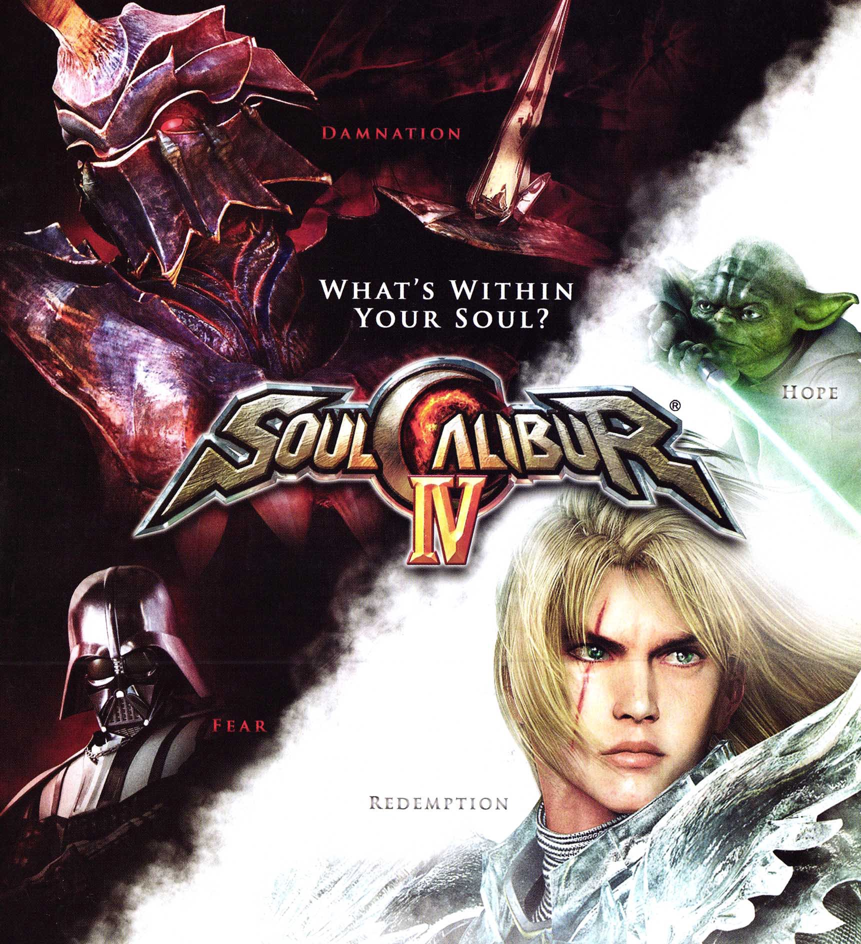
This is the angry mob lynching of gaming, The Spotty Bulorb is surrounded in its sleep, worn down and then killed. While its children watch! Or maybe you killed them first? OK, so it's just like nature. But nature can be so cruel.

Level 1

Pokemon

You've been playing for ages and you run into a low-level Pokemon. That's when you realise your super-powered team of fighters has become a remorseless unit. What chance does a level 2 Pidgey have against your level 67 Glaceon?

gamesradar.com
The official website of the internet



AVAILABLE 7.29.08

W[illegible]ULCALIBUR.COM

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
May contain content inappropriate for children. Visit www.esrb.org for rating information.

BANDAI NAMCO Games

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 LIVE

SOULCALIBUR® IV & ©1995-2008 NAMCO BANDAI GAMES INC. LUCASARTS, THE LUCASARTS LOGO, AND THE STAR WARS CHARACTERS, NAMES AND ALL RELATED INDICIA ARE TRADEMAKS OF & © LUCASFILM LTD. © 2008 LUCASFILM ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY LTD. OR LUCASFILM LTD. &® OR TM AS INDICATED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. USED WITH PERMISSION. "PLAYSTATION", "PLAYSTATION" AND "PS" FAMILY LOGO ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC. MICROSOFT, XBOX, XBOX 360, XBOX LIVE, AND THE XBOX LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE MICROSOFT GROUP OF COMPANIES AND ARE USED UNDER LICENSE FROM MICROSOFT. THE RATING ICON IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF THE ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION. ALL OTHER TRADEMARKS AND TRADE NAMES ARE THE PROPERTIES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

Made with love by

RETROMAGS

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!